

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

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Table Mountain, Cape Town

INTRODUCTION

Cape Town, "the Mother City", is a city full of attractions combining natural beauty with international facilities. A population of about three million is made up of people from many original cultures.

The city centre sits between Table Bay and Table Mountain in the City Bowl with museums, heritage sites, markets, shopping, restaurants and nightlife. The Bo-Kaap area is formed from narrow roadways with colourful Georgian cottages on the hill towards Table Mountain populated by descendants of the city's 17th and 18th century Muslim slaves. The Bo-Kaap Museum allows you to explore one of the homes.

The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront (V&A) is an old and active harbour which has been developed as a home to designer stores, national retailers, boutiques, restaurants, coffee shops, fast-food outlets, two cinema complexes, hotels and craft markets. The clock tower is where the ferries to Robben Island depart from. The Victoria Wharf shopping mall has around 250 shops with designer brands, crafts, traditional art, antiques and jewellery.

To the south of the city is the Cape Peninsula with villages extending down both coasts. To the west, on the Atlantic side, are the city suburbs of Seapoint, Camps Bay and Clifton. Further south are the villages of Scarborough, Kommetjie, Noordhoek, Hout Bay and Llandudno.

On the east side of the city is False Bay and the villages of Fish Hoek, Clovelly, Kalk Bay and, at the end of the railway, Simon's Town on the Cape Peninsula. At the end of the peninsula is the much visited Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope. On the western side of False Bay are the Strand and Gordon's Bay. Beyond False Bay is Walker Bay and the town of Hermanus, then around the point is Pearly Beach eventually reaching the most southerly point in Africa at Cape Agulhas.

To the north and west of the city are the Durbanville Winelands and the west coast. The west coast suburbs of Table View and Bloubergstrand are fast growing areas and offer excellent views back to Table Mountain. Inland, to the East of the city, are the Winelands and the towns of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek.

HISTORY

The original peoples were Bushmen who lived in small, loosely knit groups. They depended on game and were widely dispersed territorially. The Hottentot also lived in the region and were defeated in battle with the Dutch in 1713 and lost their identity as a cultural group and intermarried with slaves and others to form the Cape Coloured people.

The first recorded discovery of the Cape of Good Hope was by Portugal's Bartholomew Diaz in 1488. Antonio de Saldanha was the first European to land in Table Bay in 1503 and named 'Table Mountain'. Table Bay was called 'Saldanha' until 1601 until changed to 'Table Bay' by van Spilbergen.

In 1652 the Dutch East India Company established a post at Table Bay to provide vegetables, livestock and medical facilities for ships. During the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company was very active and gained sovereign rights in the Cape of Good Hope. The Cape became an outstation of the Dutch East India Company's eastern empire, based in Batavia in Java.

The first road was to the tree-covered mountain slopes of Newlands and Kirstenbosch to provide the needed timber. Wheat, oats and barley grew well in the Liesbeek River valley and the formation of a grain-farming enterprise in 1657. The early settlers on their discharge from the Company settled as independent farmers along the valley in Rondebosch and Rosebank. Van Riebeeck the first Governor acquired the Bishopscourt Estate in 1658 and established the first vineyard in South Africa. Van Riebeeck handed over the government of the Colony in 1662 to Zacharias Wagenaar.

In 1666, work started on the Castle of Good Hope with soldiers moving living there from 1674. In 1667 the Company established a cattle-post in the Hout Bay valley.

In 1737 eight ships were wrecked in a single storm in Table Bay, with a loss of over 200 lives. This forced the Company to build another alternative port at Simon's Town where ships were safe under the lee of the Peninsula highlands.

The discovery of diamonds in 1867 at the confluence of the Gariep and Vaal Rivers catapulted Cape Town's importance and in 1880 Cecil Rhodes acquired the monopoly over the Kimberley diamond mines and then went on to develop the De Beers diamond empire. Gold was discovered in 1886 on the Witwatersand which further strengthened South Africa's importance.

In 1899 Paul Kruger the then President of South Africa declared the South Africa War with Britain. A fierce war with 300,000 British soldiers fighting. In 1902 the two republics surrendered and signed the Peace of Vereeniging.

In 1910 the Union of South Africa came into being with the parliament to be located in Cape Town. The majority black population was excluded from power. In 1912 the African Native National Congress and later changed to the ANC was formed to resist white domination. In 1918 the Afrikaners formed the National Party as a counter movement and become very powerful in developing hard line Afrikaner nationalism and the formation of apartheid.

In 1952 the ANC organised a successful 'Defiance Campaign' and in 1960 the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) organised large demonstrations against the pass laws and some violent actions left

many dead. The government then banned both the ANC and PAC who started an underground campaign.

In 1965 District Six in Cape Town was declared a white only area. All the residents were moved and the area destroyed. Only in very recent years has reconstruction started on the declared land. The story is well told at the District Six museum.

From 1984 to 1990 was a time of protests and violence against the regime. In the late 80's both sides agreed that the best way forward was settlement and Nelson Mandela started secret talks with the government from his jail cell. In 1989 PW Botha had a stroke and was succeeded by FW de Klerk who became President. On the 2 February 1990 he unbanned the ANC, PAC and Communist Party; lifted large sections of the emergency regulations and announced the release of many politic prisoners.

On the 11 February 1990 Nelson Mandela walked out of prison after 27 years and in 1993 won the Nobel Peace prize along with P.W. de Klerk. On the 17 April 1994 the first election where all citizens could vote took place and Nelson Mandela became the President and Thabo Mbeki and FW de Klerk the deputy presidents.

South Africa is now a stable democracy and focusing on poverty reduction, education, and the development of a strong economy. Thabo Mbeki was elected President in 2004. Nelson Mandela officially retired at the age of 85 in 2004 and had his 90th birthday celebration in 2008 and recognised around the world. And Cape Town is now preparing to welcome the world with the World Cup in 2010.

ATTRACTIONS

ROBBEN ISLAND

Robben Island is a remote island in the middle of Table Bay. From 1846-1931, the island was used for leprosy patients and those mentally or chronically ill. During World War II the Island was a Defence station and in 1961 it was converted to a maximum-security prison. South Africa's first democratic President, Nelson Mandela, and the founding leader of the Pan African Congress served most of his time on the island.

In 1997 the Robben Island Museum was established and Robben Island was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1999. Today the island has a village with a bank, post office, museum and grocery store. Most of the buildings date back to World War II, a historical background supported by the evidence of bunkers and 9.2-inch guns.

Ferries sail daily from the V&A Waterfront at the Nelson Mandela Gateway taking visitors to the island. The entire trip lasts 3½ hours, including well presented guided tours which are included in the ticket price. Former political prisoners bring the struggle alive and lead groups around the prison. The Nelson Mandela Gateway has a museum with digital interactive exhibits which provide a good introduction to the tour.

TABLE MOUNTAIN

Table Mountain provides views over the city and its beaches. Table Mountain is 1086 metres high, measured at the Maclear's beacon. The plateau is about 3km long. To the east are Devil's Peak and Lions Head, with Signal Hill to the west. The Western buttresses are known as the Twelve Apostles and stand along the Atlantic Coast.

The Table Mountain Cableway was opened in 1929 and takes about four minutes. Each car has a revolving floor that gives a 360° view of the city and mountain. At the summit is a restaurant and souvenir shop. There are also various walks from 15 to 45 minutes long. Walking up is possible on one of the 350 paths to the summit.

TOWNSHIPS OF THE CAPE FLATS

The Cape Flats consists of a number of townships: Bishop Lavis, Steenberg, Hanover Park, Bonteheuwel, Manenberg, Elsies River, Langa (Sun), Nyanga (Moon), Gugulethu (Our pride), Khayelitsha where the majority of coloured and African people live. The townships are high density, low income areas with tiny and overcrowded houses. To visit the townships use one of the many guided tours.

AROUND CAPE TOWN

BLOUBERGSTRAND

Bloubergstrand is on Table Bay, 20 minutes north of Cape Town and across the water from Robben Island. Famous for its endless white, sandy beaches, sunsets and views of Table Mountain. The beachfront has pubs, restaurants and entertainment venues with views over the bay to Robben Island.

BOULDERS BEACH

A pay-for-entry beach that is part of the Table Mountain National Park at Seaforth on the way to the Cape of Good Hope adjoining a sanctuary for penguins. The high boulders and still waters make this a perfect spot for children and to view penguins.

CAMPS BAY

Camps Bay and Bakoven sit beneath Lions Head and the majestic Twelve Apostles with a palm-fringed, sandy beach and a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Easy to reach on the "open top bus" tour and about 20 minutes south of the city.

CAPE AGULHAS

Cape Agulhas is the southernmost town in Africa. The lighthouse is the second oldest working lighthouse in South Africa and was erected in 1848 and has a red and white banded tower with a museum that traces the history of the lighthouse.

CAPE POINT

In 1580, Sir Francis Drake sailed around the Cape in the 'Golden Hind' and recorded in his journal "*This Cape is a most stately thin, and the fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the earth*".

Cape Point is a part of the Table Mountain National Park at the end of the peninsula and home to antelopes, baboons, ostriches and zebras and a diverse plant species. At the tip is Cape Point where the Cape Point lighthouse stands on top of the highest sea cliffs in South Africa. A funicular runs to the top of the 678 metre peak or is a 15 minute walk.

The Cape of Good Hope is just to the west of Cape Point where swimming is possible at Bordjiesdrif and Buffels Bay tidal pools.

Cape Point is the meeting place of two great currents, one from the equator (Agulhas Current- the strongest north-south current in the southern hemisphere) and the other from the Antarctic (Benguela Current).

CLIFTON

Clifton, between Sea Point and Camps Bay, has expensive apartments and houses with wind free beaches protected from the prevailing south-easterly winds. There are four adjoining white, sandy beaches with the names 1, 2, 3 and 4 reached by stairs.

CONSTANTIA

Constantia Valley is a place of ancient vineyards, beautiful houses and forest. An historical valley with well-preserved Cape Dutch and Victorian architecture, shopping malls, golf courses, the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden and the Tokai Forest Reserve with giant Californian redwoods and ancient oak trees. Hiking paths travel through the Silvermine Nature Reserve, Tokai Forest, Cecelia Forest and the Constantia Greenbelt. Two Muslim shrines, the "Kramats" can be seen, one on the Klein Constantia Estate and the other on Islam Hill in Summit Road.

Constantia has been associated with world-class wines since 1692. Groot Constantia is the oldest vineyard in South Africa where many of the original structures are still in existence and form part of the Manor House complex with wine tasting, cellar tours and fine dining. Other estates are Klein Constantia, Buitenverwachting, Constantia Uitsig and Steenberg.

FALSE BAY

The False Bay coastline on the East side of the Peninsula is more protected than the Atlantic beaches and the water in the bay is often warmer and is normally safer for swimming. Lifeguards are on duty at all major beaches. The closest False Bay town to Cape Town is Muizenberg which is about 40 minutes from the city centre by road or rail.

FISH HOEK

A popular safe family beach on False Bay with lots of facilities. The town has a seaside village atmosphere with shops, restaurants and coffee houses. Take a gentle walk to Peers Cave for brilliant valley views and where Victor and Bertie Peers excavated the 12 000 year old Fish Hoek Man.

The Fish Hoek Valley Museum houses interpretive displays of the Peers Cave excavations as well as collections of local interest. Follow Jagar's Walk along the rocky coastline to Sunny Cove, where sign boards, explain the life history of the dolphins.

Fish Hoek is home to traditional healers, herbalists and local growers and manufactures produce a wide range of organic and herbal products for health care and beauty treatments. The Fish Hoek Mardi Gras happens annually in December.

FRANSCHOEK

Franschhoek is on route 45 to the west of Cape Town. Settled more than three hundred years ago by the French Huguenots, the Franschhoek Valley produces some good wines and has some very well known restaurants.

Franschhoek lies on the banks of the Berg River against a backdrop of the towering Franschhoek and Drakenstein Mountains. Wine tastings are available at one of the wineries on the Vignerons de Franschhoek.

Franschhoek's main street is lined with shops and galleries providing a choice of antiques, art, crafts, bric-a-brac, fromageries, chocolaterie and coffee shops.

Visit the Forestry Station for hiking, cycling, horse riding or fly-fishing. The French heritage is explained at the Huguenot Memorial Museum.

Franschhoek offers everything from internationally acclaimed country lodges to intimate B&Bs, charming country guest houses to comfortable self-catering cottages. The tourist information office is at 29a Huguenot Street (021 876 3603).

GANSBAAI

The place for the big two, the southern right whales and the great white shark.

Gansbaai is the centre of Danger Point Peninsula a coastline that includes De Kelders, Pearly Beach, Baardskeerdersbos, Kleinbaai and Danger Point where HMS Birkenhead sank in 1852 with the loss of 445 lives. The lighthouse at Danger Point can be climbed.

There are rock formations at De Kelders and the excavations as Klipgat Cave provide evidence of human activity some 80,000 years ago. Pearly Beach is a safe swimming beach as is Stanford Cove.

Most of the shark operators leave from Kleinbaai but some do depart out of Gansbaai itself which then means a trip around Danger Point! Gansbaai is 175 km from Cape Town.

GORDON'S BAY

Gordon's Bay is on False Bay on route 44, close to Somerset West and has narrow streets and bustling waterfront set against the steep mountains of the Helderberg. Follow the Faure Marine Drive around the Hottentots Holland Mountains to the Streenbras Dam for excellent whale watching between June and November and magnificent views of Table Mountain. Walk the 7km Danie Miller Trail or the Streenbras River Gorge Hiking Trail where you will need a permit.

HOUT BAY

Over the Suikerbosie Hill from Llandudno is Hout Bay to the south of Cape Town on the Cape Peninsula is a fast growing area with a busy town centre and a waterfront development.

The harbour at Hout Bay was built in 1930 and still operates as a fishing port. Hout Bay has boat cruises from the harbour, the World of Birds and a variety of restaurants to choose from. Hout Bay is a good base for horse riding, cycling and walking. Hout Bay is on the extended hop hop off tour.

Chapman's Peak Drive which runs between Hout Bay and Noordhoek is a spectacular marine drive over 9 km with 114 curves and opened in 1922 and the route towards Cape Point.

LLANDUDNO

Llandudno on the Cape Peninsula has a beach favoured by surfers and expensive real estate some having incorporated huge granite boulders and glass walled swimming pools overlooking the bay. Sandy Bay is a long walk from Llandudno beach.

MUIZENBERG

Muizenberg is the first town on the road to False Bay from Cape Town and is 36km of white sands, safe bathing and a beachfront pavilion offering a swimming pool, waterslide and putt-putt course. Muizenberg was once the home of Cecil John Rhodes founder of the De Beers diamond empire and his cottage is now a museum.

NOORDHOEK

A scenic drive over Chapman's Peak toll road on the Cape Peninsula brings one into Noordhoek and its long white stretch of sand. The beach is good for walks, horseback riding, surfing and kite flying. Noordhoek is known for its stables and stud farms. Noordhoek Farm village is group of white cottages set amongst oak trees with local artists and places to sample local wines.

PAARL

Paarl, a 45 minute drive from Cape Town, was one of the Cape Colony's first farming districts and still has many original buildings. Zeederberg Square is surrounded by picturesque Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victoria Houses. The Paarl Museum houses Cape antiques, artefacts, documents and photographs. In Patriot Street is the Afrikaans Language Museum.

There are many natural attractions in Paarl and the surrounding area: Paarl Mountain Nature Reserve; the Afrikaans Language Monument; Arboretum; Butterfly World; Drakenstein Lion Park; Die Vonds

Snake Centre; Wiesenhof Wild Park; Le Bonheur Crocodile Farm; Animalzone and; Paarl Bird Sanctuary.

Cultural attractions include art galleries; museums and the Bhabhathane weavers at Ikhwezi Centre. The Paarl Flea Market takes place every Saturday.

SEA POINT

An urban beach close to the city centre and just south of the V&A waterfront with limited swimming but good for people watching. Sea Point has restaurants, bars and pubs and busy 24 hours a day and a cosmopolitan suburb.

STRAND

The water sports area of False Bay just off the N2 close to Somerset West is ideal for sailing, surfing, fishing, water-skiing and windsurfing. The beaches have a promenade lined with café's, restaurants and shops as well as an entertainment area with putt-putt, a water slide, tidal pool and heated Olympic-sized swimming pool.

SCARBOROUGH

Scarborough is the last village on the west coast of the Cape Peninsula and lies at the mouth of Schuster's River where the Cape clawless otters live. Camel Rock is a well known rock formation on the side of the road in Scarborough that looks like a camel.

SIMON'S TOWN

Simon's Town is at the end of the rail line going South from Cape Town and is a naval town named after the governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel upon whose recommendation the Bay was used by the Dutch East India Company for winter anchorage. The "Historic Mile" with twenty one of the buildings in St Georges street being over 150 years old is a popular walk.

The Simon's Town Museum is housed in 'The Residency' and offers regular walking tours of the town centre. The Heritage Museum tells the story of the Muslim residents of Simon's Town and their forced removal under the apartheid regime. The South African Naval Museum houses a submarine diorama and is the custodian of the Martello Tower and for children is the Warrior Toy Museum.

Other historic sites include the Church of St Francis and the Roman Rock Lighthouse. Jackass penguins can be viewed from Seaforth or Boulders Beach just beyond the town. The larger part of the colony is at Foxy Beach is reached by a path along the shoreline and a boardwalk onto the beach.

SOMERSET WEST

Helderberg Basin at the junction of route N2 with route 44 is the eastern-most region of the Cape Metropole and combines the towns of Gordon's Bay, Lwandle, Macassar, Sir Lowry's Pass, Somerset West and the Strand. The Helderberg is the gateway to the Stellenbosch Winelands, the Breede River Valley or Hermanus and the Overberg region. With oak trees and thatched cottages, historic buildings and National Monuments, Somerset West show plenty of historic charm. The Helderberg Nature Reserve is at the foot of the Helderberg Mountain. The Vergelegen Estate granted to Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel in 1700 is one of the Cape's most historic landmarks.

STELLENBOSCH

The Wine Route includes over 300 members and about third of which are open for wine tastings. The heart of the town lies near the oak-lined Dorp Street which is the University's main thoroughfare which was founded in 1918.

Stellenbosch offers almost every outdoor activity with two popular mountain bike routes and six golf courses. The Jonkershoek Nature Reserve has a number of hiking trails.

Stellenbosch has galleries, museums and the Stellenbosch Conservatoire is the country's oldest music school and lots of festivals and events all year.

TYGERBERG

The Tygerberg region is 25km north of the city centre with sports stadium, shopping malls, theatres and music venues including The Velodrome and the Grand West Casino Complex.

WINELANDS

Close to the city is the wine lands region about a 40 minute drive. There are wine routes around the towns of Stellenbosch, Paarl or Franschoek. Closer to Cape Town are the Constantia and Durbanville wine producing areas. Route 62 is the longest wine route in the world and runs through the wine areas of Paarl, Wellington, Tulbagh, Worcester, Bredekloof, Robertson and Klein Karoo. The easy way is tour by car or on an organised tour stopping to visit gabled Cape Dutch homestead's, wine cellars or one of the fine restaurants.

Wine tastings are available at most estates. Taste the dry white wines first, proceed to the red wines and sample the sweeter wines last. Most cellars allow to you to buy mixed cases of wine and offer secure packing for air cargo.

The Constantia Wine Route is on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and a very old wine producing area close to Cape Town. The Stellenbosch Wine Route is cantered around the historic town of Stellenbosch with its thatched white houses on Dorp Street.

The Durbanville Wine Route is 20 kms north of the city. The Helderberg Wine Route has more estates and a large port producer. The Franschoek wine route is beyond Stellenbosch and has a strong French feel as was originally settled by French Huguenots. The Paarl wine route is just over 50 km from Cape Town and is centred around Paarl and has many attractions and Cape Dutch buildings on the Main Road.

ANIMAL ATTRACTIONS

At the Waterfront is the Two Oceans Aquarium with 3000 living animals including sharks, crabs, luminous jellies, tropical fish and a touch pool. For the real thing then a number of tour companies offer shark cave diving where sharks are observed close from the safety of a submerged cave.

Between two and three hours away are a number of game reserves such as Aquila where all the big five can be seen and safaris are in open top 4WDs.

Close to Simon's Town is the colony of African Penguins. Boulders Beach. At Hout Bay is the World of Birds, a large bird park with 3000 birds, birds, monkeys and small animals in large landscaped enclosures.

ART GALLERIES

South Africa National Gallery has exhibitions of South African and international art. Irma Stern's house has been turned into a art gallery that shows her internationally recognised works along with other contemporary artists. There are many private galleries in the city to explore.

BEACHES

Cape Town has beaches both close to the city centre and along the coast to the east and west. Clifton beach is protected from the wind and popular with Cape Town visitors. Camps Bay is accessible directly from the main road where you will find restaurants, cafes and souvenir shops. Sandy Bay is the only beach in South Africa where you are allowed to go nude and well protected from the wind. Noordhoek is a long stretch of white sand and good for walking and horseback riding.

FUN ATTRACTIONS

RATANGA JUNCTION THEME PARK

Africa's largest theme park has all manner of rides, snake and bird shows, souvenir shops and restaurants.

The Cobra catapults riders from a height of 34m along a track 910 metres long at speeds close to 100km per hour. The Sling Shot is a high adrenaline ride and the Tarantula has two giant arms that gyrate and toss riders in a whirling motion; the Bar-One Bushwhacker is a family coaster ride through the jungle; the Diamond Devil Run is a "runaway mine train" roller coaster. With a fall of 18.5 metres, Monkey Falls is one of the highest waterfall rides in the world. Sable Road exit off the N1 close to Canal Walk (0861 200 300).

MUSEUMS

CASTLE OF GOOD HOPE

The castle was built by the Dutch East India Company in 1665, located at the bottom of Buitenkant Street and the oldest structure in South Africa. Experience the dungeons, dolphin pool, and tranquil atmosphere. The castle houses the William Fehr Collection of Africana and the Castle History Museum. The corner of Darling and Castle Streets.

HOLOCAUST CENTRE

A place of remembrance of the holocaust with a full range of displays including such things as a prison jacket worn by a member of the Dachau concentration camp. The Great Synagogue with it's big dome and two towers is next door. 88 Hatfield Street.

DISTRICT 6 MUSEUM

A political history museum housed in an old Methodist Mission Church illustrates the life of a community removed in the infamous incident of Group Areas Act during South Africa's apartheid era. District Six was named the sixth municipal district of Cape Town in 1867 and home to the coloured population which in 1966 was proclaimed a White Group Area and the homes for 60,000 people were bulldozed. The museum brings this story to life. 25A Buitenkant Street.

GOLD OF AFRICA MUSEUM

A museum located in the Martin Melck House built in 1783 and displaying the artefacts from the gold rich kingdoms of Africa, Goldsmiths workshop and museum shop. In the evening the Gold Museum comes to life as a lively African restaurant. 96 Strand Street.

GROOTE SCHUUR HOSPITAL MUSEUM

On the 3rd December 1967 the world's first human transplant was successfully done at the Groote Schuur Hospital led by Professor Christiaan Barnard. To celebrate a museum has been created in the Charles Saint Theatre, the site of the transplant operation. Groote Schuur Hospital, Observatory.

IZIKO SLAVE LODGE

Built in 1679 as slave quarters, now a museum that tells the story of slavery in Cape Town. Adderley Street and Bureau Street.

JEWISH MUSEUM

The story of the Jewish community brought to life with touch screens and interactive computers side by side with a peddlers cart. Documentary films and newsreel footage alongside a 19th century Lithuanian village. 88 Hatfield Street Gardens.

SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

The South African Museum is housed in a magnificent building established in 1825 and has a full range of exhibitions, the only preserved specimen in Africa of the extinct quagga; good examples of rock art; a Whale Well with suspended whale skeletons; interactive Sunlit Sea exhibition and lots more exhibits and hands-on experiences. The planetarium adjoins it. 25 Queen Victoria Street.

SOUTH AFRICAN SLAVE CHURCH MUSEUM

The first slave church in Cape Town with a display of telling the story of Protestant missionary work. 40 Long Street.

SOUTH AFRICA MARITIME MUSEUM

An exhibition of maritime archaeology, shipping, harbours and boats and a history of Table Bay Harbour. Good displays of South Africa shipwrecks. Dock Road, V&A Waterfront.

ST GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL

From the steps of the cathedral Archbishop Desmond Tutu led a mass demonstration of 30,000 people to the Grand Parade in 1989. The cathedral was open to all races during the apartheid years. 5 Wale Street.

PARKS AND GARDENS

KIRSTENBOSCH GARDENS

The Garden covers 528 hectares with 60 hectares cultivated and the rest spread over the mountain with indigenous forest and mountain fynbos. The garden has a Conservatory with displays South African plants.

There are Fragrance Garden designed for blind people and a Braille Trail. The Herb Garden displays indigenous South African herbs. The Dell is the oldest part of the garden with figs and tree ferns.

A good collection of Cycads is displayed in the Cycad Garden. Rockeries and other displays are also found making it a superb garden to view.

RHODES MEMORIAL

Opened in 1918 and designed by Sir Herbert Baker in the style of a Greek temple using Table Mountain granite and positioned to provide views over Table Bay. M3 south of the University of Cape Town.

THE COMPANY GARDENS

The gardens were originally established to provide vegetable for the ships but in the 18th Century converted to a pleasure garden in the city centre. In front of the South African Museum.

SPORT

Cape Town has plenty of sport to both watch and participate in. Cricket is popular and played at the Newlands Cricket Grounds. Rugby is a favourite sport of South Africans and played at the he Newlands Rugby Stadium.

The Argus Cycle Tour of the Peninsula happens each March and you will see lots of cycling on roads. Popular road cycle routes are Chapman's Peak, False Bay Route, Cape Point and along the coast from Sea Point to Hout Bay.

There are plenty of golf courses, there is horse riding at Noordhoek beach and if it is the water you want then try one of the many deep sea fishing trips with opportunity to catch longfin and yellow fin tuna and broadbilled swordfish.

The mountains around Cape Town have lots of trails to use. Popular areas are Deer park which is off the Tafelberg Road; Silvermine South which is about False Bay; Jonkershoek Valley close to Stellenbosch and the Paarl Mountain Reserve. Rock climbing is possible on the many mountain cliffs.

Many dive boats operate into both oceans and it is also possible to dive with the sharks at the Two Oceans Aquarium. In the Atlantic ocean the main dive area is Oudekraal and False Bay.

Surfing happens at Big Bay, Blaauwberg, Sea Point and the big wave at Dungeons off Hout Bay which in the correct conditions can produce waves of 20 to 30 feet.

ESSENTIALS

REACHING CAPE TOWN

Cape Town International Airport is 20 minutes from the Cape Town City centre. Numerous direct flights land at Cape Town International Airport while some flights touch down in Johannesburg first. South African Airways is the main international and domestic carrier. Direct flights between the USA and South Africa take about 15 hours and to Australia between 9 to 14 hours. Flights between London and Cape Town take about 12 hours. The best way to reach the city is to pre-book a transfer service or use a taxi.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance: 10177

Fire Brigade: 021 535 1100

Police Flying Squad: 10111

CAPE TOWN HOSPITALS

Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital (021 480 6111).

Durbanville Medical Clinic (021 980 1200).

Tyberg Hospital (021 938 4911).

Panorama Medical Clinic (021 938 2111).

Vergelegen Medi Clinic (021 850 9000).

Red Cross Children's Hospital (021 658 5111).

TIME

South Africa operates two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time throughout the year, making it an hour ahead of Central European Winter Time and seven hours behind Australian Central Time.

WATER

Cape Town water is safe to drink.

HEALTH

There is no national health service and payment will be needed. It is therefore essential that all visitors have arranged adequate travel health insurance prior to arrival. No inoculations are needed and the health infrastructure is good.

HIV/AIDS is a serious issue with high infections. High quality water is available everywhere in Cape Town and the Western Cape and tap water is safe to drink. Cape Town and the Western Cape are malaria-free. In the event of an emergency call an ambulance on 10177.

LEGAL

The legal age for drinking and buying alcohol is 18, and 16 to smoke or buy tobacco products and the legal age of consent for sex. It is illegal to drink in public places. For homosexual sex the legal age is 19 years. The drink driving limit is 0.05g per 100ml of blood. The importing and use of illegal drugs is a serious offence.

MONEY

The South African unit of currency is the Rand (R). The coin denominations are 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5. The notes are R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200. Banks are efficient with a wide range of services. ATMs can be found in shopping centres as well as in the centre of most cities and towns. Banking hours vary but are generally from 09:00 to 15:30 on weekdays. On Saturdays banks open at 09:00 and close at 11:00. Banks are closed on Sundays and public holidays. Cape Town International Airport has 24-hour foreign exchange facilities. Visa and MasterCard is widely accepted and American Express and Diners Club are also accepted in many places.

NEWSPAPERS

In the morning there is the Cape Times and Business Day (English), Die Burger (Afrikaans). In the afternoon the Argus (English) and on Sunday the Sunday Argus (English), Sunday Times (English) and Rapport (Afrikaans).

SAFETY

Cape Town is reasonably safe but a lot of crime does exist, some of a very violent nature and so precautions should be taken. The tourism authorities and the police take crime against visitors very seriously and are willing to advise on the current areas to avoid. Some areas are definitely 'no go' for visitors.

Be street wise and don't carry all of your cash with you. Use the hotel safe immediately on arrival and use marked taxis or the open-top bus to move between areas. Try not to have cameras loose and make yourself look like a local. Do not allow strangers to assist you at ATMs as there are several ATM scams in operation. Try to explore in groups and stick to well-lit streets especially at night and this also includes the walking routes up Table Mountain.

If driving, store parcels out of sight in the boot of the car and do not leave luggage unattended. Park in well-lit areas at night and drive with your doors locked and your windows closed. Be alert at traffic lights.

If approached by beggars, the general advice is not to provide money but rather goods or food or donate to organisations which help street children.

ELECTRICITY

The voltage is 220/230 volts AC at 50 cycles per second. Three pronged, round plugs are used.

SHOPPING

Most shops open between 08:00 and 17:30 but later in places such as the V&A Waterfront and Canal Walk. All stores must charge the Value Added Tax (VAT) of 14% but foreign visitors can claim back VAT on purchases.

Adderley Street is an area of shopping centres, malls, curios, jewellery stores and fashion shops. Canal Walk is a large shopping mall with hundreds of stores, cinemas, an indoor carting track, skate park, gaming arcade and restaurants, and is open until 21:00.

Long Street has many small shops and is an area of character. The V&A Waterfront has a number of high quality shops and craft markets. The cobble-stoned Greenmarket Square, off Burg Street in the centre of town, is a craft market with carvings, masks and drums, beadwork, jewellery, clothing, leatherwork and ceramics every day except Sunday.

TIPPING

Tipping is expected and is usually R2 per item for porters and 10% for taxis and restaurants.

VAT

VAT can be claimed back at departure.

TRANSPORT

The Golden Arrow Bus Service runs within the greater Cape Town area and the main bus terminal is on Strand Street opposite Cape Town Railway Station.

An easy way to familiarise yourself with Cape Town is to take the city sightseeing bus which starts outside the Ferryman's pub at the V&A Waterfront. The route twists through the city centre, up to Table Mountain and then down to the Atlantic coast at Camps Bay and works its way back along the coast to the Waterfront. An additional blue route operates, with less frequency, a mini peninsula tour and takes in some of the outlying areas of Cape Town.

Rikkis are open vans that carry up to six passengers and may be hailed. They offer services in the City Bowl and down to Camps Bay. Also useful between the V&A Waterfront and the city centre.

Taxis are hired at taxi ranks, hotels or summoned by telephone. The taxi rate varies between companies and runs at about R10/km. It is advisable to ask for a fare estimate before you go.

An excellent road network links the largest metropolitan areas with the smallest villages. The speed limit in urban areas is usually 60 km per hour, and on freeways 120 km per hour unless otherwise indicated.

Wearing seat belts is compulsory. Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence and traffic laws are strictly enforced. A valid driver's license, provided that the photograph is an integral part of the document, and provided that it is printed in English, is accepted. Drive on the left and give way to traffic approaching from the right.

Cape Town has a suburban rail network to the outlying suburbs. The track to Simons Town is spectacular being so close to the sea and the train has a restaurant carriage. Metro trains have first and economy class carriages. Cape Town Railway Station is at Adderley Street. Be careful on some train routes as pickpockets and muggings do occur. However policing is improving on most lines by the Railway Police.

MORE INFORMATION

On [Cape Town eGuide](#) we have all the up-to-date listings for restaurants, entertainment, theatre, nightclubs and a whole lot more. So do visit Cape Town eGuide (www.capetowneguide.com).

[Cape Town eGuide](#) also has all the accommodation deals you need and all the best tours in town.

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