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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

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Best of Cape Town for free

Cape Town, 1 Day

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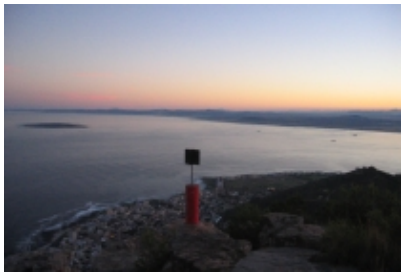
Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: For most visitors from the ‘developed world’, Cape Town is a pretty affordable destination. But for those on a real budget, the range of great free activities in Cape Town is a great bonus. From exploring the mountains and wildlife to learning more about culture and history, many of Cape Town’s visitor highlights are free and easily accessible. This list highlights a few of the best free things to do and see.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Cape Town

St. George's Cathedral
Anglican Cathedral

Penguins at Boulders Beach
Beach with Jackass Penguin colony

Lion's Head
Mountain hike for a bird's eye view of the City

Table Mountain
The mountain that is the heart of the City

Southern Right Whales
Migration of Southern Right whales

Chapmans Peak Drive
Scenic drive along the Atlantic coast

Kalk Bay - St. James
Relaxed fishing harbour and hippie towns

Bo Kaap
Cape Malay neighborhood

Llandudno Beach
Small hidden beach

Noordhoek Beach
Long white sand beach

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Day 1 - Cape Town

QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +27 (0)21 424 7360
fax: +27 21 424 9772
http://www.stgeorgescathedral.com/

location:
5 Wale Street
Cape Town Western Cape
8000

1 St. George's Cathedral

wcities

DESCRIPTION: A landmark site for its role in South African history and a meeting place for modern day protests, St Georges Cathedral in the heart of Cape Town represents a time of change in South Africa. In 1986, Desmond Tutu was enthroned as the first black archbishop of South Africa. From the doors of Ste Georges Cathedral, he led numerous marches and campaigns for the formal end of apartheid. © NileGuide

location:
Boulders Beach Drive,
Cape Town Western cape
7975

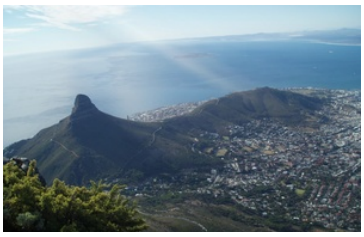
2 Penguins at Boulders Beach

DESCRIPTION: Standing at just below a foot tall, the diminutive African penguins waddling onto shore, jumping into the sea or just sunbathing are quite a sight to see. Along the southern Cape Peninsula, just past Simonstown, there are several turnoffs for the Boulders Beach area. The second turnoff has the fewest tour buses and leads to a walkway above penguin nesting areas, to a beach where one can swim with penguins, or to another more secluded beach with fewer penguins but nice sheltered swimming areas and boulders. © NileGuide

contact:
tel: +27 21 487 6800(Tourist Information)

location:
Signal Hill Road
Cape Town Western Cape
8001

3 Lion's Head



editor

DESCRIPTION: Guarding the western edge of Cape Town, Lion's Head offers hiking with views over the Atlantic Seaboard, Robben Island, the Cape Town city bowl, and Table Mountain. For those who prefer having their feet off solid ground, tour companies operate tandem paragliding from Lions Head's slopes to the Atlantic coast. Locals can be found hiking Lions Head daily but full moon evening is often popular for sunset drinks on the summit. © NileGuide

contact:
tel: +27 21 424 0015
fax: +27 21 423 0402
http://www.tablemountain.net/

location:
Table Mountain Rd
Cape Town Western Cape
8000

4 Table Mountain

DESCRIPTION: Standing guard over Cape Town, Table Mountain defines the city. For early seafarers, the Mountain signified arrival at this port of call. For the original inhabitants of the area, the Mountain was the source of myth and intrigue. For modern day Cape Tonians, Table Mountain is the heart of daily life. At 1086 meters and home to 1400 species of flora, Table Mountain is a spectacular nature reserve surrounded by a city. With hundreds of routes to ascend, the Mountain can keep an avid hiker and climber busy for years. © NileGuide

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location:
all along the coast
Cape Town Western cape

Southern Right Whales

DESCRIPTION: From late August through early October, Southern Right whales migrate in large numbers past the Cape Peninsula on their way to mating grounds in the Indian Ocean. You can catch sights of the whales all along the coast, often just off shore. Generally the False Bay seaboard and Hermanus are best for viewing but the whales are often spotted off the Atlantic as well.

contact:
tel: +27 21 791 8222
fax: +27 21 790 9169
http://www.chapmanspeakdrive.co.za/

location:
Between Hout Bay and Noordhoek
Cape Town Western cape
7806

hours:
depending on conditions

Chapmans Peak Drive

DESCRIPTION: One of the most beautiful drives in the world, Cape Town's Chapmans Peak Drive is a spectacular 10 km coastal drive linking Noordhoek to Hout Bay. In spring (Sept-November) Southern Right Whales can be spotted in Hout Bay. Year round there are stunning views from numerous viewpoints and picnic spots. A trail to Chapman's Peak itself starts just before the highest viewpoint on Chapman's Peak Drive. If the road is closed or if one only wants to access the portion of the road closer to Hout Bay, a complimentary day pass can be acquired from the toll booth. © NileGuide

Chapmans Peak Drive

contact:
tel: +27 21 426 4260

location:
Harbour Road
Cape Town Western Cape
7975

5 Kalk Bay - St. James

DESCRIPTION: Quaint little towns along the False Bay coast, Kalk Bay and St James surround an operating fishing harbour that lends the antique and coffee shops a tranquil view. In spring, Southern Right whales abound, often brushing against the harbour walls. Kalk Bay makes a great stop for lunch on a tour of the Cape Peninsula or a nice leisurely walking day. © NileGuide

wcities

contact:
tel: +27 82 423 6829
http://www.bokaap.co.za/

location:
Cape Town Western cape
7800

hours:
Best to explore during the days as some areas are not the safest

6 Bo Kaap

DESCRIPTION: One of the oldest residential areas of Cape Town, the Bo Kaap is a unique neighborhood with a strong cultural and social history. Home of a "Cape Malay" community, the neighborhood is a collection of brightly painted houses and mosques. Strolling through the streets (daytime and larger streets only) of the Bo Kaap provides a taste of a distinctly Cape Tonian community and lifestyle. If you find yourself in the area for dinner, try out Biesmielleh restaurant on Wale Street that serves delicious Cape Malay fare. A visit to the District Six Museum will offer some more insight into the history of the Cape Malay community of Cape Town. © NileGuide

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location:
Llandudno
Cape Town Western Cape

7 Llandudno Beach

DESCRIPTION: A small, beautiful, boulder bordered beach along the Atlantic Seaboard, Llandudno beach is a local favorite among the surfers and nature lovers. Its secluded location tends to keep Cape Town's wind away and its lack of cafes and bars keeps the Camps Bay beach scene away. The boulders on the northern side of Llandudno beach offer a fun scenic walk. Llandudno is a great place to watch the sunset over the ocean with the mountain backdrop glowing red. © NileGuide

location:
Noordhoek
Cape Town Western Cape
7985

Noordhoek Beach

DESCRIPTION: Based at the southern end of Chapman's Peak Drive, Noodhoek beach is well known to locals, horseriders, kite flyers, and the like. The longest of any of the Atlantic Seaboard beaches, Noordhoek offers great sunset views and hours of walking. Watch out for windy days though, the beach is exposed and the sand can whip up.

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Cape Town Snapshot

Local Info

Freedom and slavery, incarceration and release, hope and despair--all these are exemplified in the Mother City, which sits on the shores of Table Bay at the southern tip of South Africa. This is Cape Town, the place of opposites and contrasts where the cultural heritages of three continents--Europe, Africa and Asia--converge to give visitors a spectrum of choices unparalleled by any other tourist destination. And you don't have to go far to experience it all: most attractions are within 30 minutes of each other, thanks to Cape Town's vast network of freeways and railroads. So whether you want to go paragliding at Lion's Head or savor the wine country of Stellenbosch or go for a heavy dose of history and culture at the city's many museums, it's all within easy reach.

Sights

No trip to Cape Town is complete without a visit to popular and breathtaking Table Mountain, where you can rappel 112 meters down the"Long Drop" to the foot of the mountain. As a reminder of the resiliency of the human spirit, Robben Island, the former prison home of Nelson Mandela, is also not to be missed. Other points of interest include Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Woodstock Cave, Sea Point Promenade and the Hout Bay Museum. To experience the real Africa, you can also take a tour of Cape Flats, an expansive, low-lying township that became known as"apartheid's dumping ground."

Dining

Good food and great wine are a natural part of life in Cape Town. Because of its seaside location, seafood is a specialty. Check out the various delights at the more than 70 restaurants at V&A Waterfront. Fine food and wine can also be enjoyed at many of the vineyards near Cape Town. Try Constantia Wine Farm, where you can sample the menu at Buitenverwachting Restaurant overlooking the vineyards. Rust en Vrede and the restaurant at Jordan Wine Estate in Stellenbosch are also worth visiting.

Shopping

V&A Waterfront is not only a hotbed of restaurants, it also holds more than 400 retail stores that offer great shopping for all budgets. If that's not enough for you, check out Greenmarket Square at the city center. Antique collectors will be intrigued by the choices at the Antiques Craft Market at Long and Wale Streets. And be sure to make a stop at Cape Town North, where you can check out the Canal Walk Shopping Center, which is built around a series of canals. Be ready to spend and splurge in Cape Town because the shopping choices are endless. And don't forget to bring an extra suitcase.
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History

Cape Town is a unique city—a blend of Asia and Europe in Africa. It is dominated by, and owes its existence to, the steep and coarse grizzled and gnarled slopes of Table Mountain that tower 1,000m above the sea, surrounding it on three sides. A sandstone soil and small mountain streams gave life to prehistoric peoples and animals living on its slopes. The City also attracted sailors and farmers of the trading nations and today has a population city of 3 million people descended from every corner of the world.

Long before the Himalayas or the Rockies were formed, Table Mountain began to rise out of the sea(by isostasy) at the southwestern tip of Africa. The emerging relief has been checked and scarred by the erosion of sea, wind, rain, fire and ice. Today Table Mountain is a fantastic array of buttresses and ravines, most famously evident in the"Twelve Apostles."Homo Erectus saw similar sights 750,000 years ago—and left abundant stone tools for our museums. The fossilized footprints of"Eve," 117,000 years old, are one of the finest relics found near Cape Town.

Relatives of the Bushmen, theKhoi, were maintaining a hunter/gatherer and herding economy around the mountain when in 1503 the first European saw, and then climbed Table Mountain. He was a Portuguese Admiral, Antonio de Saldanha, and he was navigating the route to India bravely pioneered by his compatriots Bartolomeu Diaz(1488) and Vasco de Gama(1497).

As the new route from Europe to the East flourished, so more sailors saw the Mountain and its peninsula. Francis Drake in 1580 described it as"the Fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the globe." The British, in particular, developed trade with theKhoi but no European settlement was developed. However, in 1647 a Dutch ship, the Haarlem, was wrecked in Table Bay and its large crew marooned for a year. Their survival convinced the Dutch East India Company that it was safe enough, and the land sufficiently fertile, to justify building a permanent supply station at the Cape. Thus, on Christmas Eve 1651, Jan van Riebeeck, a commander in the Company(out of favour following allegations of fraud), was dispatched from Amsterdam with three ships and a daunting task to establish a station at the Cape capable of supplying passing ships with fresh food and wine.

Van Riebeeck arrived in April 1652, constructed a wooden fort and laid out the Company gardens, part of which remain to this day. He set to work on vine growing and produced wine within four years(February 2nd 1659). Work soon began on a stone Castle and a parade ground that can still be seen. Subsequent Governors, in particular, Simon van der Stel(1679-1699), expanded the settlement dramatically. Huguenot refugees from France helped to develop the areas of Franschhoek, Stellenbosch, Paarl and Wellington as notable wine growing regions.

The Company provided slaves from the East to help with the work; indeed, slaves sometimes outnumbered Europeans in the settlement. The influence of Asia can be seen in the architecture of Cape Town, the taste of its spicy food, the style of its music and festivals, even in the grammar of the Afrikaans language that evolved in Cape Town from Dutch. Asian blood is also evident in much of Cape Town's population.

Cape Town became known as"the tavern of the seas," a welcome half-way house on the long journey between North and East. Her strategic importance was(and remains)

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crucial to world trade and with the threat of Napoleon seizing the settlement, the British garrisoned the elegant Dutch town in 1795.

Under Imperial British rule the city grew. Among the whitewashed Dutch buildings large colonial, neo-classical buildings were arranged. The old farmlands became suburbs and, with the discovery of diamonds in the hinterland, the docks and city expanded rapidly. Cecil John Rhodes(1853-1902) made his home in Cape Town, buying vast tracts of the mountains slopes that today are public forests, the Botanical Garden at Kirstenbosch and the highly acclaimed University of Cape Town.

Following the formation of the modern South Africa in 1910, Cape Town became, and remains, the nation's Legislature. The iniquitousapartheid laws drafted in that Parliament limited black migration to the city and divided white people and those of mixed racial descent. The mountain slopes became leafy"white" suburbs while the townships on the sandy plain were variously designated for"colored" and"black." The racial division of suburbs ended in 1990, but racial and socio-economic differences between areas remain marked. A huge migration of black people followed the easing of racial laws, and the city has grown vastly in the last decade and is now one third Xhosa(Mr. Mandela's tribal group).

The city center has changed too, particularly the reclamation of land and subsequent development of the foreshore in the 1940s. The highly successful development of complexes such as the Waterfront, followed in the 1990s. Many new hotels and the refurbishment of traditional attractions such as the Cable Car, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens and Cape Point have positioned the city as one of the world's emerging prime tourist destinations and an important growth point in Southern Africa.
©

Hotel Insights

Most visitors prefer not to stay in the centre of Cape Town since there are more attractive areas in the surrounding suburbs, and the city is well served by fast freeways. Families may wish to be within walking distance of the Waterfront, while others may prefer to be near beaches. The Winelands, Hout Bay and Constantia offer very beautiful surroundings and the South Peninsula would be perfect for those who don't want to rush around. Gardens is very convenient.

Beaches

There are over 100 beaches around the Cape Peninsula but the"classic" beaches are in Camps Bay and Clifton. Accommodation in these areas is priced at the higher end of the scale. Staying a few minutes' away in Sea Point will save you a lot of money and cost you little time.

The classic view of Cape Town(two peaks with the"Table Top" between) is from Blouberg beach, which is a little far out but has a great view.

Anywhere in the South Peninsula will be within easy reach of beaches such as the vast Muizenberg beach, Noordhoek, Kommetjie, Fishhoek and Scarborough. This area is relaxed and very pretty, but also affordable and within easy reach of Cape Point. The seaside villages and harbours are most attractive. However, it will take an hour to get to the city center and a little more to the winelands so this area suits those who want to"chill out." Monkey Valley in Noordhoek is a popular place to stay, so too are the guesthouses of Kommetjie and Simon's Town.

Hout Bay has a good beach, in a very beautiful setting, and some lovely places to stay. Great fish is to be had in the harbour and horse-riding is very popular too. It is in easy(and magnificent) contact with Cape Town but is, of course, more expensive.

Waterfront& Sea Point/ Green Ponit

The Waterfront complex will suit any age or person but families, in particular, will appreciate the array of shops, restaurants and entertainment in the Waterfront. The Cape Grace, The Table Bay and the Radisson Hotel Waterfront are very fine five star hotels. At the other end of the price range the Breakwater Lodge is excellent value for money.

Near to the Waterfront are Green Point, a busy area but very well located, and the next suburb, Sea Point. They are well positioned and Sea Point has a superb promenade for sunset walks. It also has many restaurants and shops, although the area can be a little seedy. There is a very great deal of accommodation of all standards available, so if you arrive at the airport and need a place to stay head for Green Point/Sea Point.

City Centre

During the'90s the city centre became rather unsafe. This situation has improved(with extensive use of surveillance cameras), but it is still not the best area to choose for a relaxing holiday and tends to be rather quiet at night. The exception is Long Street, which is a great evening"hang-out" for the young at heart, and some inexpensive accommodation is available.

Gardens

Above the city centre is Gardens, which is a leafy and very elegant area. Kloof Road has a fine concentration of restaurants and cafes. There are some beautiful homes and many have been converted into excellent guesthouses. The most historic hotel in Cape Town, the Mount Nelson, is in Gardens and retains a distinctly colonial class.

Constantia

Constantia has long been a favored destination of the rich classes of England. It is leafy and elegant, terribly civilized and properly wealthy. The oldest wine farms are in this area(although it is remarkably close to the center). There are a number of excellent restaurants and some very fine accommodation. Expect high prices.

The Southern Suburbs

Middle-class areas such as Newlands(home of the major sports venues) Rondebosch and Claremont are leafy and well-located for all the attractions. Some visitors may find them too suburban for holiday making.

The Northern Surburbs

As these are predominantly Afrikaans and traditionally conservative, English speakers may prefer not to stay in these suburbs, although areas like Tygervalley and Durbanville are a little more culturally accessible.

The Winelands

It can be a good idea to spend a night or two staying in the winelands, not only to cut out the hour journey from Cape Town but to enjoy the very dignified and certainly spectacular scenery of the area

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and some excellent restaurants and wine farms. Stellenbosch is very beautiful, charming and sophisticated and the oldest town in South Africa. Paarl is also pretty; the Grande Roche is popular with German visitors. The Franschhoek valley is gorgeous and very French in its style. Here, you will fine superb cuisine. Somerset West is a larger town, but also comfortable and well-located. The prestigious Erinvale golf course is on its fringes.

Hermanus

Hermanus is an hour- and a-half from Cape Town. It is famous for whale spotting during the months of July through December. It is a pleasant seaside town with fine coastal walks and some good accommodation. It is well-located for the Walker Bay wine farms and drives into the lovely Overburg region.
©

Restaurants Insights

Unbeknownst by many visitors to Cape Town, there is a superb tradition of cuisine in the city. The Malay slaves transformed the traditional dishes of Europe and Britain into a unique"Cape Malay" style, using the spices from the passing boats. Such dishes include Bobotie and Breedies. However, most restaurants focus upon Mediterranean and Pacific Rim influences. Naturally, fish and other seafood is very important too, and there is a growing number of African restaurants.

Cape Town was always"the tavern of the seas", and is an important wine-growing area to boot, so some good drinking is in order. There is a genuine love of dining and drinking in Cape Town, and you will find local cuisine and various styles from around the world cooked and presented superbly. Many restaurants have beautiful settings and decor. Most visitors are also amazed at how inexpensive it is to eat out. Too good to be true? Just try.

The Atlantic Seaboard

In Camps Bay, Blues is a perennial favorite. Next door, and sharing the same magnificent view over the beach, is Villamoura, a top quality and very popular fish restaurant. On the main road there are also a number of less formal and trendy eateries.

For general fare and family diners the Waterfront and Sea Point Main Road have numerous places to eat. For good Chinese food, try the Fortune Garden on Beach Road in Sea Point. Anatoli's is a popular Turkish Restaurant in Greenpoint, and Beluga's is in"The Foundry" around the corner. On the Waterfront is Emily's, where you will find superb South African cuisine(and a good deal of eccentricity too).

Some of the hotels have excellent restaurants, particularly the Cape Grace, the Radisson Waterfront Hotel, and the Mount Nelson in Gardens.

For bars try the Ambassador Hotel in Bantry Bay at sunset. In the Waterfront try the historic Ferrymans, Quay Four, or the Sports Café.

Gardens& Woodstock

Aubergine and the Blue Danube are popular for continental cuisine. The top of Long Street is abuzz in the evenings with all manner of trendy places; for African food and vibes try Mama Africa at number 178. If nothing piques your interest here, try Kloof Street, a minute's drive up the hill, for more cafés and restaurants.

On Church Street in central Cape Town, near Greenmarket Square, Bukhara is an excellent Indian Restaurant.

Constantia

Constantia lays claim to some of the finest dining in South Africa. Amongst which, Buitenverwachting offers superb Haute Cuisine and, more relaxed but just as classy, La Colombe provides excellent Provencal cuisine. A very enjoyable, well priced restaurant and excellent bar is at Peddlars, on the Bend.

The Winelands

Don't miss the restaurants of Franschhoek: Haute Cabriére, Le Quartier Francais and La Petite Ferme are all well regarded, and other restaurants in the area are excellent, too. In Paarl, Bosman's at the Grande Roche Hotel is a very formal and award-winning Haute Cuisine restaurant. The Jonkershuis on the Spier estate offers an excellent and fascinating traditional Cape Malay buffet. The Boschendal Estate offer a famous picnic during the summer months.

In terms of wine tasting it is very unfair to single some estates over others—try your luck! You are unlikely to be disappointed. But, to mention some good places to start: Fairview near Paarl; Delaire(mainly for the view); Warwick in the lovely Idas Valley and Cabriére in Franschhoek for excellent champagne-style wines.

Blouberg

At sunset, the Blue Peter Hotel has a popular bar and light food where diners can watch the sun set over Table Mountain. On the Rocks is a formal restaurant with exceptional views.
©

Nightlife Insights

Cape Town is by its nature a playful city(materialists left for Johannesburg or London long ago). But the diversions of Cape Town tend to be the beaches, sports, mountain walks, day-trips, wine tasting and by evening, sunsets and fine dining. The arts are necessarily constrained by finances and there are few theatres and concert venues. Museums are, equally, strapped for cash, although a few are well worth a visit. However, the love of music(particularly jazz) is very strong and cinema, too, is popular. There are also some venues for nightlife and a theme park. Festivals and special events are frequent, so check when you're in town.

Museums

The SA Museum in the Company Gardens is excellent. The Whale Gallery steals the limelight but the Planetarium and the other exhibits are well done. The Aquarium(in the Waterfront) is superb and highly recommended. The Castle is the oldest building in South Africa and has the excellent William Fehr art collection. The impressive Groot Constantia estate has a grand Manor House that is well worth a visit. Robben Island is now a museum; it was formerly a prison for political activists including Nelson Mandela. Unfortunately, the organisation and quality of tours on Robben Island is sometimes poor.

Art

The best place to see art and antiques is at commercial galleries. Try Church Street near Greenmarket Square in the city centre. Small galleries are also found in most shopping malls. In-Fin-Art on Wolfe Street is a good place to start.

Cinema

Cinemas are located in the shopping malls such as Cavendish Square in Claremont

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and the Waterfront. One exception is the Labia, an old cinema and landmark in Gardens. Cinéma Nouveau(in Cavendish Square and the Waterfront) feature more arty films. There is an IMAX cinema in the BMW Pavilion in the Waterfront. The standard of cinemas is usually very high.

Theatre& Concerts

There are two main theatre complexes: the Baxter in Rondebosch and the Artscape on the foreshore. They feature the full range of theatre, dance and music. The standard and appeal are variable. During the summer there are excellent concerts at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden on Sundays(take a picnic) and the Spier Estate in the Winelands. The Theatre on the Bay in Camps Bay is home to light comedy and thrillers. For"fringe" theatre try On Broadway in Greenpoint.

Jazz

Cape Town has a strong passion for jazz, but there are remarkably few regular venues that are easy to get to. The Green Dolphin in the Waterfront is well known, and Café Camissa is in Gardens on Kloof Street. 169 on Long Street is another venue.

Nightlife

To find hip night venues try The Jam on de Villiers Street, the clubs at the bottom of Long Street or La Med at Maiden's Cove near Clifton. The biggest night venue by far is Dockside at Century City. The Drum Café is very trendy and cool(32 Glynn Street).

Theme Park

Ratanga Junction opened in 1999. It has various rides; one of which,"The Cobra," is one helluva ride! There are restaurants, a cinema and entertainment venues. This is a good place for families to have some fun. ©

Things to Do Insights

Tours of Cape Town cannot be readily undertaken on foot or by public transport. However, there are many companies offering tours very similar to the ones below, using microbuses and qualified guides. These are excellent value for money. Otherwise follow the routes outlined below using a car.

Sir Francis Drake described the Cape Town peninsula as"the fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the globe." With fantastic vistas, lovely bays and coastline, penguins, and the most southwesterly tip of Africa, if you do only one thing in Cape Town, this is it! It is a full day visit—try to get an early start.

Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden

From Cape Town, take the M3(Blue Route) south. You pass the Groote Schuur Hospital(where the first heart transplant took place in 1967), Mostert's Mill(built in 1796 and still in working order), the grand buildings of the University of Cape Town and Newlands forest. At the traffic lights turn right onto Rhodes Avenue. You will come to the famous Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden on the right. Stop here and take a walk in the gardens—they are spectacular.

Rejoin Rhodes Drive and continue south. At the junction turn right and proceed along Rhodes Drive surrounded by forest. Keep going along the windy road until the far end where you will find a traffic circle. Turn left down the Constantia Nek Road(M41). As the hill levels out you will see a sign pointing right for Groot Constantia. Turn right. You may wish to stop at the small parade of fine shops on your left and visit the Old Cape Farm Stall. Then carry on to the Groot Constantia Estate. Enjoy the old Manor House and some wine tasting near the exit.

Stay on Main Road all the way to the Cape Point Reserve. Once you pass Muizenberg you will see its magnificent beach. Very soon, on the right, you will see Rhodes Cottage. Here, Rhodes died in 1902, you may wish to stop and visit the small museum. Look out on the left for the colourful beach changing-rooms in St James. Along this road you will pass interesting antique and art shops. You may wish to stop at Kalk Bay harbor; when the boats arrive, it becomes a festive fish market.

The main road runs on through Simon's Town. Stop in Jubilee square. You may wish to have lunch here and spend time enjoying this old British naval base. You can find details about the town at the information office.

Cape Point Nature Reserve

Resume your journey south. You will pass the Black Marlin on the left; this is a popular lunch stop(book ahead if possible). Perfect stop before heading to the Cape Point Nature Reserve. Enter here. The Reserve is principally dedicated tofynbos, the indigenous flora. At the end of the reserve you will reach Cape Point. Spend time here walking down along the cliffs or up to the Lighthouse. A good lunch is available at the Two Oceans Restaurant.

As you drive away from the Point you will soon come to a left turn for the Cape of Good Hope. If time allows, take this, the Cape is the south-western tip of Africa and worth the extra 10 minutes' drive to it.

Spier Cellars

The Cape Winelands are world-renowned for superb wines and great beauty. The mountains enclose fine Dutch-style towns developed by the Dutch and Huguenot settlers in the late seventeenth century. They took on the wild landscape and left a fine wine industry, pretty towns and a great heritage.

Depart Cape Town and take the N2 highway, you will pass the airport but keep going until you see the turn off to Stellenbosch(R310). Take this turn off, turn left and after a few miles you will see the Spier Cellars on the right. Spier is a winelands entertainment complex. Wander among the old buildings and visit the Cheetah project. As you wish, have a wine tasting here and visit the extensive wine shop. Rejoin the R310 and continue toward Stellenbosch.

If you are interested in brandy, take the next right and make your way to the Van Ryn Brandy cellar for a fascinating tour of the Distillery. Resume your journey along the R310. When you reach the T junction turn right and follow the road into Stellenbosch.

Stellenbosch

As you approach Stellenbosch turn right into Dorp Street. The variety of architecture and the great oaks and canals of Dorp street are magnificent, but keep your eyes open for signs pointing left to the tourist information. Go there and ask for a walking tour of the town and for free maps of the winelands. The Village Museum is also worth a visit.

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Resume the journey, turning right at the end of the road toward Franschhoek. Follow the R45 the length of the beautiful valley until you enter the town. There are many excellent places for lunch in the town and on the pass at its far end. You may wish to walk around the Huguenot Memorial at the end of the high street.

Cabriére Estate

Driving from the Memorial, back down main road, take the first left and follow the signs to the Cabriére Estate(you will follow a farm track). Here, you can sample excellent champagne-style wines. Leave Franschhoek on the R45, retracing your steps, and stay on this road toward Paarl.

At the junction at the end of the R45 turn left and then right into the Agter Paarl road toward the Fairview Estate. The estate will soon be seen on the right. This award-winning estate produces fine wine and goats cheese. See the goat house in the parking area.

Continue along the Agter Paarl road—stop at any of the estates if you are still in the mood for tasting—and at the junction at the end of the road turn left onto the R44. You will come to turnings onto the N1 freeway; turn right toward Cape Town. The journey back to the city takes about 50 minutes.

The Castle of Good Hope

Find a map of the city center from any hotel or information booth. Then follow this route on a journey through the history of the city and some of its most beautiful sights and beaches.

Make your way along Strand Street to The Castle of Good Hope(the oldest building in South Africa). You may wish to park and take a guided tour of the castle and its art collection. Resume down Darling Street past the 1905 City Hall. At the end of the road turn left into Adderley Street. You will see the Great Church on your left(first built in 1700) and the old Slave Lodge on the corner. Pass the Cathedral of St.Mary and turn left into Queen Victoria Street and park. From here explore the Company Garden, walking up to the oldest museum in the country, the South African Museum. It showcases the natural history of South Africa, and early human communities of the sub-continent. It is noted particularly for its whale gallery and collection of Bushman rock art, including the important Linton Panel. This is the only museum in South Africa with an adjoining Planetarium.

St George's Cathedral

Stroll downhill along shady Government Avenue and view the Houses of Parliament. At the bottom you will find St George's Cathedral on the left. Cross the road and walk down St George's Mall, the city's main pedestrian thoroughfare. Turning to the left you will find Greenmarket Square where there is a lively market during the week. Visit the Old Town House on the left side of the square and exit via Burg street which adjoins it. The first right is Church Street where you will find art galleries and antique shops. If you turn left at the end of Burg Street you can soon turn right again into Queen Victoria Street to find your car.

Gordon's Bay

This tour is especially recommended when Southern Right Whales calve off the Hermanus coast(July to December). It is best to get an early start to make the most of the day.

When you reach the beach front you may wish to stop and enjoy the magnificent beach. Continue along the coast into Gordon's Bay(you may wish to stop in the harbor). The road continues south along the coast on the Faure Marine(R44)/ Clarence Drive. This is a truly marvelous road with views across False Bay to the Cape Peninsula.

Follow the coast around; take some time to explore the villages along the way(such as Pringle Bay), and visit the Harold Porter Botanic Garden in Betty's Bay(on the left of the road). Continue through Kleinmond. After a while, you will come to the junction with the R43; follow the signs to Hermanus. You will soon cross the Bot River. Follow the R43 on to Hermanus.

Once in Hermanus, follow the main road until you see the Marine Hotel on the right; turn right here and park. There are various places for lunch. After lunch wander along the cliff path, enjoying the tremendous views and, of course, spot whales playing off the coast. You will also find the popular Harbour Museum.

Cape Flats and Table Mountain

Climb the amazing Houhoek pass and soon you will be travelling through the famous Cape apple growing districts of Elgin and Grabouw. Stop at one of the farmstalls along the way. Stop in the car park at the head of Sir Lowrys Pass(it is on the bend) for a wonderful view of the Cape Flats and Table Mountain. Now continue down the pass and all the way back to Cape Town on the N2.

Guided Day Trips Cape Discovery Tours(+27 02 1426 1641/http://www.sa-venues.com/explore/capediscoverytours/)

History Tours Direct Action for Peace and Memory(+27 02 1448 5760/ http://www.sa-venues.com/explore/dacpm/)

Boat Tours Tigger 2 Charters(+27 02 1790 5256/ http://www.sa-venues.com/explore/tigger2charter/)
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Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

Cape Town International Airport(+27 11 453 9116/ http://www.airports.co.za/home) is the second largest airport in South Africa and offers transportation to destinations throughout the world. The following airlines provide service to Cape Town:

Air France(+27 21 934 8818/ http://www.airfrance.com/) Air Mauritius(+27 21 421 6294/ http://www.airmauritius.com) Air Namibia(+27 21 936 2755/ http://www.airnamibia.com.na) British Airways(+27 21 936 9000/ http://www.british-airways.com/) Egypt Air(+27 21 461 8056/ http://www.egyptair.com.eg/docs/home.asp) Lufthansa(+ 27 21 415 3735/ http://www.lufthansa.com/)

From the Airport

Shuttles& Taxis: Shuttle and taxi providers offer service to and from the airport. Major providers include City Hopper(+27 21 934 4440), Dumalisile(+27 21 934 1660), Legend Tours(+27 21 936 2814), Magic Bus(+27 21 534 9105) and Way 2 Go(+27 21 696 5544).

Car Rentals: Some of the major car rental companies include: Avis(+27 21 934 0330/ http://www.avis.fr) Budget(+27 21 380 3140/ http://www.budget.fr) Europcar(+27 21 934 2265/ http://www.europcar.fr) Hertz(+27 21 386 1560/ http://www.hertz.fr) Cape Town Car Hire(+27 21 386 7699/ http://www.slashcarhire.com)

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Train

Numerous train lines service Cape Town. Some of the most popular include the Blue Train, Rovos Rail, Spier Vintage Train, and Outenigua Choo Tjoe. Train service can usually be booked through the Mainline Passenger Service Call Center(086 000 8888/ http://www.spoornet.co.za).

Car

Three national roads start in Cape Town. The city can be reached via N1, N2, N7, and also via R62.

Sea

Cape Town's port, located in Table Bay, is of historical importance. One of the world's busiest shipping corridors leads through Cape Town.

Getting Around

Public Transport

Three main bus providers service Cape Town. Greyhound(+27 83 915 9000), Intercape Mainliner(+27 21 419 8888), and Translux(+27 21 449 3333) provide transportation to multiple destinations. The Metro Rail(http://www.metrorail.co.za/) provides service throughout the city and beyond.
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Fun Facts

Cape Town Country: South Africa

Cape Town by the Numbers:

Population: 3,497,000 Average Winter Temperature: 26°C/ 79°F Average Summer Temperature: 18°C/ 64°F Most Precipitation: 52 mm/ 2 in Number of Official Languages Spoken: 11 Number of Libraries: 107

Quick Facts:

Electricity: 220/230 volts, 3-pin-plug, model M Time Zone: GMT+2 Country Dialing Code: 27 Area Code: 21

Did You Know?

Cape Town was established in 1652 as a supply outpost for the Dutch East India Company. Since this time, the city has had an extended history of imperial occupation culminating the apartheid state that lasted from 1910 to 1994. Although one of the safest destinations in South Africa, visitors are advised to exercise caution when traveling.

After being released in 1990, Nelson Mandela made a speech of his hopes for an apartheid-free South Africa at Cape Town City Hall.
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