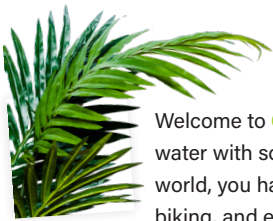




# Cape Town



Welcome to **Cape Town**. You're right on the water with some of the best beaches in the world, you have access to mountains with hikes, biking, and endless outdoor activities. You have good food, wine country, funky fashion, and culture. Incredible opportunities like safaris are right at your fingertips. It's all the exotic things you imagine when coming to Africa, but with all the modern conveniences of a major metropolitan city.

What makes Cape Town special isn't just one thing... it's a mix of landscape, people, culture, food, and so much more. Cape Town is a confluence of races, colors, religions, and histories, it's why South Africa is often referred to as the **Rainbow Nation**. Another draw to Cape Town is the atmosphere.

In this course, I am going to be your guide to Cape Town. I'm going to show you where to go, what to do, the history behind the city, and how you can experience this amazing place like a local.

**This is Cape Town Demystified.**

This PDF is a summary of the course. It is recommended you download it to your devices or print it out to take along with you on your trip.

## Chapter 1:

# An Overview of Cape Town

### Cape Town's Nature, Explained

#### Plantlife

- ✈ Cape Town is a part of a tiny floristic kingdom. It has unique plant life very specific to this place on earth
- ✈ Cape town is 1 of 25 hotspots that have the most biodiversity in land and sea
- ✈ Has nearly 10,000 unique plant species

#### Landscape

##### Uniquely shaped mountains

- ✈ The shapes of these mountains are the result of many layers of rocks that have been folded and squeezed for millions of years.
- ✈ Has some of the oldest mountains on earth. Much older than the Alps and Himalayas.

#### Table Mountain

- ✈ Contains over 2000 plant species.
- ✈ It's also home to hundreds of animal species.
- ✈ Great for hiking!



#### Things to Look Out For



**Dussies:** Dussies are small rodents that can be found all around the mountains.



**Guineafowl:** Stalky birds that roam in groups and have this really colorful face.



**Stone Pines:** An African-style tree that goes up and then the branches reach really far out. Very "Lion King esc"



## History of Cape Town and South Africa

The earliest record of human activity in Cape Town dates back to more than 12,000 years ago. There is no written record, so we don't know much about Capetown until 1488.



### The Portuguese

A ship of Portuguese explorers ventured down the west coast of Africa and came upon a unique looking bay. Here, the explorers also found native tribes that were trading throughout the region. The explorers gave this place a name that was translated as "Cape of Storms." It was later named the "Cape of Good Hope".



### The Dutch

Cape Town was eventually taken over by the Dutch. The Dutch needed people to work on their farms as they grew this new settlement. In addition to importing slaves from Asia, they also sent Dutch citizens to move to Cape Town to work.

They brought tons of new plants to Cape Town. This included grapes for wine, citrus, potatoes, and wheat.



### The British

After more than 100 years of the Dutch ruling this area, the British came and captured it. The British soon enforced anti-dutch policies that were meant to rid their new colony of the Dutch language and culture. The Dutch ended up moving inland into South Africa and forming their own communities.

These dutch speaking Africans are known as Boers. They speak a language called Afrikaans which is a mix between Dutch and local dialects. Afrikaans is still an official language of South Africa.

### Gold and Diamonds

The British increased their control to places they previously left alone. This caused major conflict with local tribes all over South Africa. Britain fought wars with both the Dutch descendants, as well as the other major tribes like the Zulus. By the 1900s the British had won all the wars but at a high cost. They decided to consolidate all British colonies in South Africa into one South African Republic. They granted them a constitution, which prepared them for independence from Britain.

### Transfer of Power

Transfer of power happened slowly over the course of decades and the power was transferred mainly to White Afrikaners, the descendants of Dutch settlers, as well as English speaking whites who were leftovers from the British era.

And even though these white natives represented only about 20% of the population, they were given all the power. Black South Africans had little participation in the newly independent country, a country that was already highly divided.

By the 1950s, each citizen was placed into a ranking based on their race. By the 1960s, nationwide laws made it illegal for Blacks and whites to live in the same towns.

Over the next two decades, more than 3.5 million black South Africans were forcibly evicted from their homes and relocated to segregated cities, known as "townships." It was one of the largest mass evictions in history.

Black political parties organized and protested, but were suppressed, with many of their leaders fleeing or being thrown into prison. The most notable of which was Nelson Mandela who was arrested in 1962 and given a life sentence.

### Change Begins

Internal unrest and international condemnation led to dramatic changes beginning in 1989. The ruling government started by lifting the ban on Black liberation parties. They then instituted freedom of the press and released all political prisoners.

On February 11, 1990, Nelson Mandela, walked out of prison after 27 years. For the first time, the government allowed real elections and in 1994 Mandela was elected as the first black President of South Africa.

Even though the country has made huge strides in the last 30 years, undoing centuries of legislated segregation doesn't happen overnight.

**Note:** This is a highly oversimplified version of the deep and very controversial past of Cape Town, especially in terms of the political and social oppression.



Nelson Mandela

## South Africa Today: Race

### Identity & Religion

#### Facts About South Africa

South Africa has nearly 60 million people. It is one of the most ethnically diverse places on earth.

South Africa is considered to be a healthy free democracy where elections and civil liberties are generally respected.

Though in recent years there have been some serious instances of corruption in the government.

Its economy is the second-largest in Africa. Yet, income inequality and the wealth gap is a major problem.

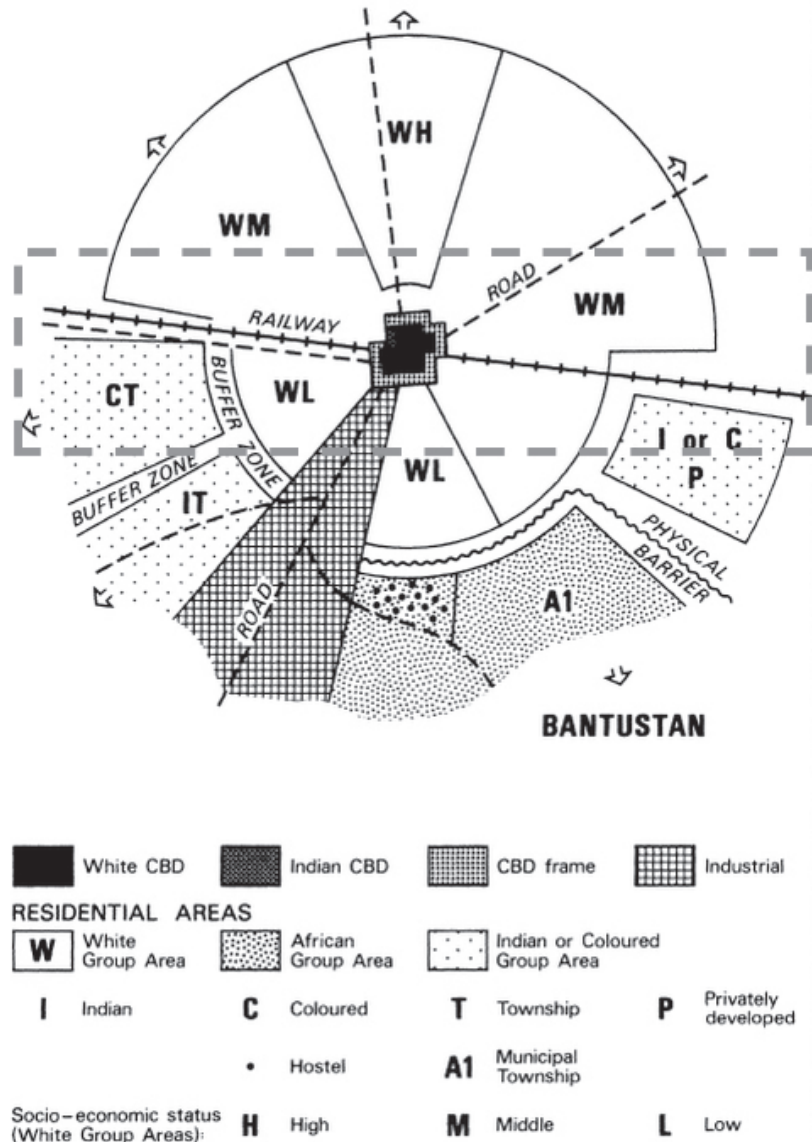
#### Townships still exist.

Townships were settlements that were designated for Black, Indian, or mixed-race South Africans.

Many people were forcibly segregated and made to live in what most people would consider as shacks and slums.

Many continue to be underserved, often without electricity, running water, sewage, or access to government services.

Today, these townships are perhaps the largest physical symbol of this country's not so distant history and current racial divide.



#### Cape Town

This map shows an urban design plan for the city of Cape Town during the apartheid years. Each zone was designated for different racial groups. Urban centers were reserved for whites and the outer areas, being zoned for other races.

These plans carved physical division deep into the city of Cape Town and today many of the large townships still exist. The work of undoing these deep divisions is only barely beginning.

Cape Town is actively trying to change this, and it's our responsibility as visitors to make sure we are not ignorant of these issues and we are being respectful.

While the history of Cape Town is checkered, to say the least, the people here are amazing. They are funny, kind, and interesting and they all want to see their country continue to take strides forward.

**Remember:** As visitors, it is important that we give respect to this history and the present-day situation. When you're here you may feel some of that divide.



## Chapter 2:

# Learning the Map

### Arriving in Cape Town

#### Arriving

Cape Town's primary airport is Cape Town International. It's located about 30 minutes outside the city center. This airport is a large international airport and is really easy to navigate by following the signs in the terminals.

#### The best way to get to and from the airport is usually Uber.

- ✈ You can also get a taxi or shuttle bus, but to ensure you get the fastest and most affordable ride, my suggestion would be to stick with Uber.
- ✈ The pickup and dropoff points for Ubers can be found in the parking structure just outside the main arrivals and departures entrance. And the Uber app will show you where that is.

#### VISAs

Once you get to the airport, you will pass through South African passport control.

Currently, there are 52 countries that are not required to obtain a visa before arriving, including those from the US, Canada, and many European nations.

- ✈ AS a rule of thumb, you should always check beforehand to see if you need to apply for a visa in advance.
- ✈ Get the most recent Visa info [here](#).

If you happen to have a passport from one of the countries that don't require a Visa, then all you need to do is show up with a current passport and you are allowed to stay for up to 90 days.



#### Cash

This is something you can do at one of the airport ATMs or one of the many ATMs scattered throughout the city.

The currency in South Africa is called the Rand.

- ✈ This currency has been known to be semi-volatile in the past but, in recent years it has become a bit more reliable.
- ✈ On average \$1 USD is worth anywhere from 15-19 Rand.

#### How Much Money Should I Pull Out?

My suggestion with pulling out cash here is to not go crazy. Almost every business takes some form of card, and you aren't going to find yourself constantly strapped for cash.

There will be the odd business or local seller who only operates in cash and for that reason, I'd say having a hundred to two hundred dollars in Rand is wise. If you ever run out, there are plenty of ATMs once you're in the city.

You'll find that the cost of most things is slightly cheaper than what you'd find in North America and Europe. So expect to spend \$10 to \$15 dollars or less for most of your daily meals.

Rand Currency



## SIM Cards

If you're looking to have data and cell service while you're in Cape Town, and don't have an international cell plan, my suggestion would be to go with a local SIM card.

These can be bought at an airport cell phone kiosk, or you can head into the city get one from a grocery or cell phone store where they sell local SIM cards.

These SIM cards should only cost \$10-20 USD and come with anywhere from 1-20 gigs of data (depending on the one you choose).

It's super easy, takes only a few minutes and the seller can show you how to install the SIM card.

## Getting around the City: AKA Should I Rent a Car?

### Uber

When it comes to day to day transport around Cape Town, your best friend is going to be Uber.

Most of the activities within the city are only a 5 to 15-minute drive from each other, and Ubers are extremely cheap. With most rides costing between \$2 and 8 dollars.

### Buses

There is a public bus system called the MyCiti bus, and there are taxis you can wave down. But neither of which I would recommend.



**Remember:** Keep your original SIM card. Because once you go home, you'll want to swap the SIM card back to your original one.

### Places to Explore If You Rent a Car

Cape Town has endless things to do and see within the main city bowl, but there are also a bunch of amazing things just outside the city that are worth exploring. Things like the Garden Route, or Muizenberg, and even some further Wineries like Franshoek.

The countryside of Cape Town is incredible and worth exploring and for that reason, it may be worth renting a car for part of your trip.

You can rent a car either at the airport or at one of the handful of rental companies within the city.

While there are several languages spoken within South Africa, the main and universal language is English. So as an English speaker you'll have no issues getting by.



**Don't forget to pack a few power adapters.**

In South Africa, they use a big chunky three-pronged adapter called a type M plug.



## Staying Safe in Cape Town

### Specific Tips

The number one rule when it comes to Cape Town is that don't make any rookie travel mistakes. Don't walk by yourself, don't go down quiet or dark alleys, don't flash your cash or valuables.

#### Be careful while walking in the city.

- ✈ You should avoid walking anywhere by yourself and especially don't walk anywhere at night.
- ✈ Thieves and pickpockets are known to prey on people who are by themselves, and because of this, even if the walk is only a few blocks, my suggestion is to take an Uber.
- ✈ Some specific areas to avoid walking alone
  - The observatory, Salt River, Woodstock, and greater downtown areas.
  - This isn't meant to scare you, you can definitely walk the city. But if you are going to walk somewhere, have a destination in mind.
- ✈ Unless you are with a very experienced local and guided tour, the townships should be avoided.
- ✈ As you learned earlier townships are a structural result of apartheid, and where the vast majority of crime and violence take place.

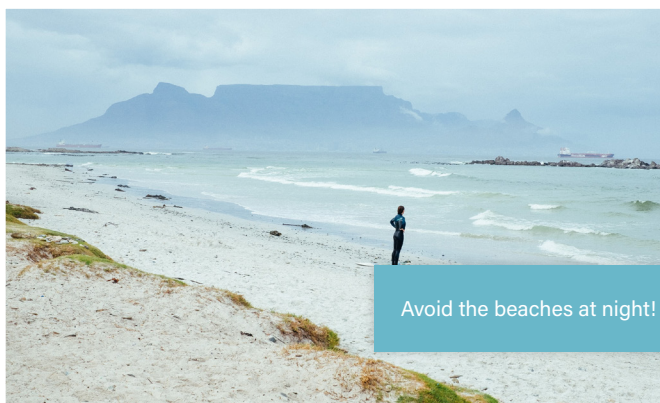
The key to staying safe in Cape Town is being aware of your surroundings, and not taking any silly travel risks.

### Parking and Car Safety:

- ✈ Never leave any valuables in the car.
  - Smash and grab robberies are common if you leave things visibly laying on seats or on the dashboard.
  - Keep your rental car's inside clean and everything out of sight.
- ✈ Panhandlers.
  - It's not uncommon for panhandlers and the homeless to approach vehicles sitting at red lights and ask for money.
  - Sometimes these people are selling things, some times they are asking for donations but in general, they don't mean any harm.
  - Just don't be oblivious with your window down and your face in your phone as someone approaches.

### Parking

- ✈ Parking Attendants
  - They are usually homeless people who have given themselves the job of helping people park.
  - These are not official city employees or people paid by the establishment you're going to, and you're not obligated to pay them by any means.
  - However, in addition to helping you park, they sort of look after the cars in their area. Making sure no one breaks in or gives you any trouble.
  - In return for their services, they will ask you for a tip.
  - Again you're not obligated to pay them anything, but in Cape Town, it is customary to give them a couple Rand or some of your pocket change to say thanks.



Avoid the beaches at night!

### Staying Safe at the Beach

#### Travel light

Leave your valuables at your hotel or Airbnb and as we've discussed, don't flash things like cash or expensive stuff.

#### Vendors and Solicitors

Most beaches will have vendors walking up and down the beach selling things like snacks, sunglasses, ice cream, etc. These people are totally safe, but just know they are there.

# Chapter 3

## What to Do in Cape Town

### Learn the Map

#### Table Mountain, Lionshead, and Signal Hill

These three geological reference points effectively cut Cape Town in half and are home to dozens of outdoor activities.

#### Camps Bay and Clifton

Camps Bay and Clifton are definitely some of the poshest neighborhoods in all of Cape Town.

They feature large beautiful homes that sit on the rising slopes of Table Mountain and lookout on some of Cape Town's most popular beaches.

#### Seapoint and Greenpoint

Considered the Soho of Cape Town.

There are tons of great restaurants, markets, and cool nightlife to explore.

This area is lined by the Sea Point Promenade and is perfect for morning walks, going for a run, or riding your bike along the sea wall.

#### The Waterfront.

Starting at the top, the Waterfront is a popular tourist area that features restaurants, shopping, the aquarium, hotels and museums.

It's a great place to walk around, go shop for souvenirs, or grab a bite along the harbor.

#### The Greater CBD Area

What some would call the heartbeat of the city. It's one of the most lively areas and is filled with trendy restaurants, shops, and nightlife.

Features the trending Kloof street. This area is popular with young people and has loads of historical and new age influences.

#### The Gardens

This is mainly a collection of residential neighborhoods and is a great place to stay if you're looking to break away from some of the more touristy areas like Camps Bay.

#### Main City Bowl

This area is the downtown and financial district of Cape Town. Features a mix of cool colonial buildings and modern skyscrapers.

The downtown tends to have a completely different vibe to the rest of Cape Town. There are lots of hotels, and restaurants there, but it's not somewhere locals spend a lot of time.



Camps Bay



Lionshead



## Table Mountain, Explained

Table Mountain is unique not only because of its distinctive shape but also because of how it was made.

Dates back to some of the world's first above-water landmasses. Table mountain is one of the oldest mountains on earth, making it 6 times older than the Himalayas and 5 times older than the Rockies. If we go back 300 million years ago, Table Mountain was actually at sea level.

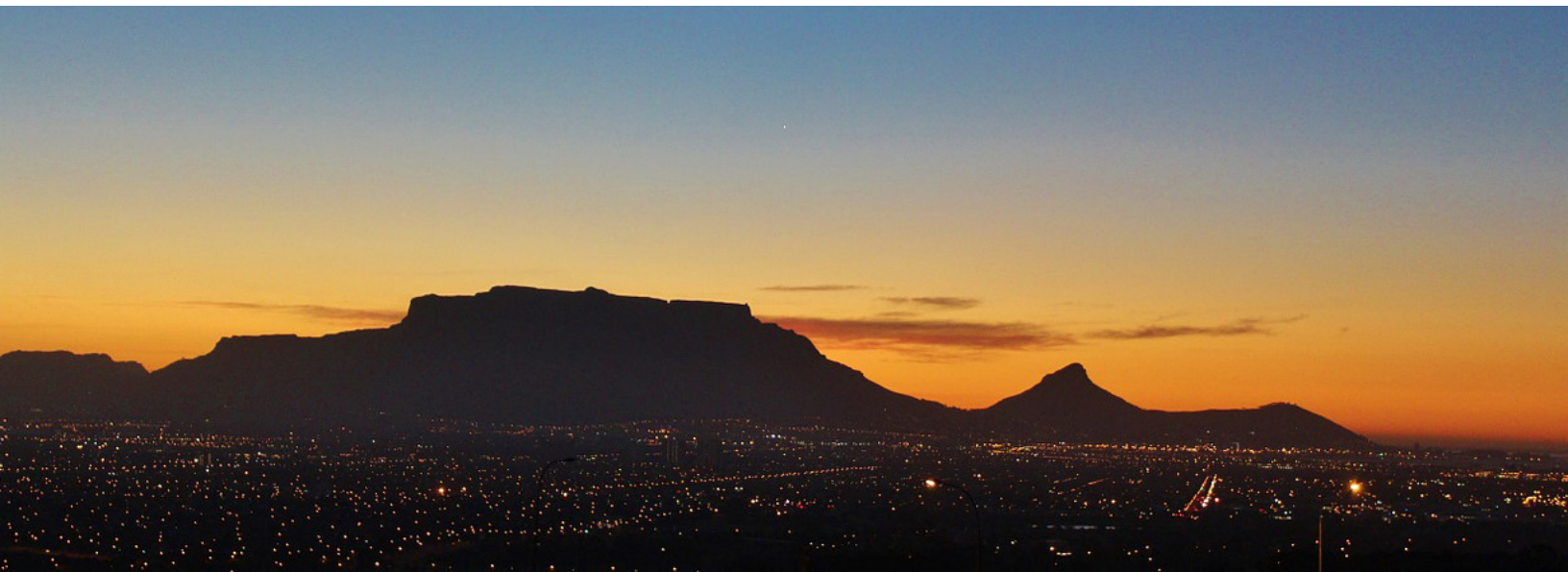
- ✈ Today these steep cliffs stretch down the coast of Cape Town with an impressive set of ridgelines that they call the Twelve Apostles.
- ✈ The unique features of the Mountain are what made Cape Town a desirable place for humans to live.
- ✈ The mountain creates a unique livable climate, in what would otherwise be a desert.



### "Table Cloth"

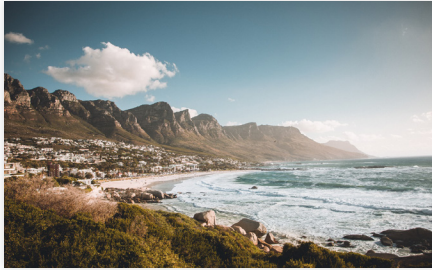
It's a white cloud system that often forms and appears to flow off the top of the flat mountain.

- ✈ This phenomenon is called an Orographic lift and it's created when air is rapidly pushed from a low valley to higher elevation.
- ✈ Legend attributes this phenomenon to a pipe-smoking contest between the Devil and a local pirate called Van Hunks who was known for frequently hiking the mountain.
  - When the tablecloth is visible, it symbolizes their contest.





## Beaches

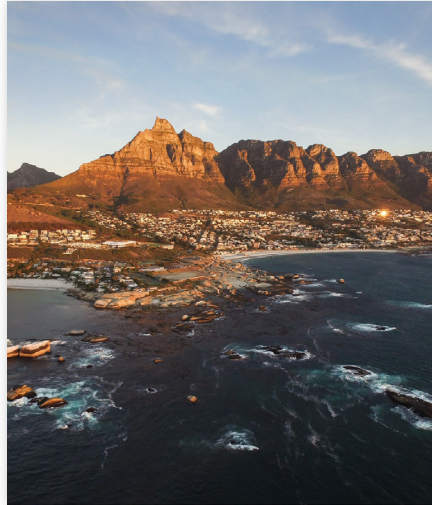


### Camps Bay

One of the most popular beach areas in Cape Town. Located at the base of Table Mountain, it features fine white sand beaches, natural rock swimming pools, relaxed restaurants and cafes, and a spectacular view of the mountains.

- ✈ While a bit touristy at times, there are plenty of secluded hangout spots along the promenade.
- ✈ Parking can be hard to come by in Camps Bay.
- ✈ Consider renting a couple beach umbrellas for you and your mates.
  - These umbrellas can be rented for 30-50 rand (or a couple bucks) from guys on the beach.

Camps Bay is the perfect place to spend the day exploring and dipping your toes into the water.



### Clifton Beach

Home to the most expensive real estate in South Africa. It is a beautiful stretch of four white sand beaches surrounded by mountains and beautiful homes. Located a short bit north of Camps Bay, this slice of beach is slightly less populated, but still very popular.

Clifton Beach is protected from the notorious south-easterly winds. Making it far less windy and a great place to sunbathe.

Like with Camps Bay, you will want to Uber here to avoid parking, and again, look to rent umbrellas from vendors on the beach.

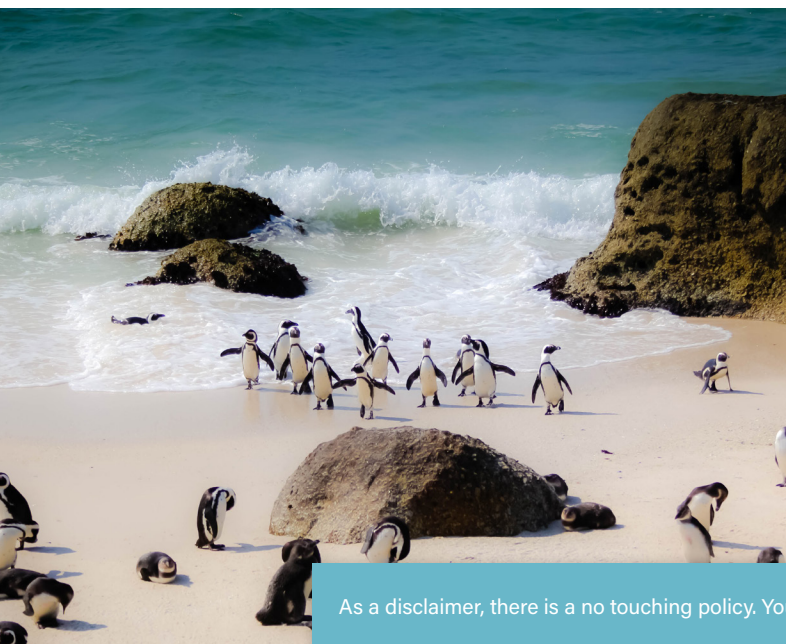


### Muizenberg

Just outside of Cape Town is called Muizenberg. This bohemian beachside town is famous for its colorful huts on the beach and for being a great beginner surf spot.

About 30-40 minutes outside of Cape Town, the city is perfect for day trips and weekend getaways.

- ✈ A great place to learn how to surf.
- ✈ There are also lots of hikes and outdoor activities to experience if you're going to be there for a few days.
- ✈ If you find your way to Muizenberg check out the shops and restaurants lining the main beach.
  - Here, you can rent surf boards, bikes, and sign up for some surf lessons. The surfboard and wetsuit rentals should only cost you \$10-15 dollars.



### Boulder Beach & penguins:

#### Home to the very cute African Penguin.

Located in an adorable fishing village about an hour outside Cape Town called Simons town. Boulder beach is a small stretch of rocky white sand that plays host to one of the only places you can find penguins outside of the arctic circle.

- ✈ The beach and penguin reserve is part of a national park and costs 152 Rand for adults and 76 Rand for children.
- ✈ The park has a number of wooden boardwalks that take you above and around the main beach where you can see the penguins from a distance.
- ✈ You can also go to the second entrance which spills out onto the beach itself where you can hang out on the sand with these cute little guys.

As a disclaimer, there is a no touching policy. You can get close, go for a swim with them, but you can't touch the penguins.



## Casual Outdoor/Fun Stuff

### Weekend Markets

Ranging in interests and offerings, there are a handful of these markets scattered throughout Cape Town, and each provides a slightly different vibe.

Whether it's food, souvenirs, clothes, or cool trinkets... the weekend markets are the perfect way to taste the local flavor and fill your bag with cool Cape Town trinkets.

#### Best weekend markets

- ✈ Oranjezicht City Farm Market, V&A Waterfront
- ✈ The Bay Harbour Market, Hout Bay
- ✈ Kirstenbosch Craft and Food Market, Kirstenbosch Stone Cottages
- ✈ Neighbourgoods Market, The Old Biscuit Mill, Woodstock
- ✈ Durbanville Craft Market, Rust-en-Vrede
- ✈ Watershed at the V&A Waterfront

**Note:** If you're going to hit the markets, be aware that many of them will close early in the afternoon.

### The Waterfront

The Waterfront is a popular shopping and dining district that provides a range of casual to high-end dining and retail shops, in addition to a variety of entertainment areas like the Cape Ferris Wheel and Aquarium.

With the hint of an East Coast harbor feel, you can admire the ships in the yard, grab a bite to eat at one of the numerous restaurants, and check out the street performers who frequently sing traditional African songs.



Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens

### Walking Tour of Bo-Kaap

These rainbow colored houses are some of the most iconic buildings in all of Cape Town, and they are part of a historic neighborhood called Bo-Kaap.

Back in the day, all the houses had to be white but, when the laws changed and slaves were allowed to buy these properties, the owners painted them bright colours as an expression of their freedom.

- ✈ Take a walking tour to learn about the history of the place and also get some good photos.
- ✈ Grab some food.

[Link to the audio tour](#)



Bo-Kaap

### Green Market Square

Located in the heart of downtown, Greenmarket Square has been around since 1696. It has a rich and controversial history, but today it's where you can find some of Cape Town's coolest open-air flea markets.

Greenmarket square is a great place to find traditional African souvenirs. You can pick up local art, crafts, fabrics and artifacts from almost every country on the continent... making it a treasure trove of unique trinkets and hidden gems.

### Concerts in the Park

Cape Town is particularly nice during their summer months, and the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens take full advantage of it by throwing amazing concerts in the park every weekend.

Some of the freshest and funkier beats in Africa come through the concerts in the park, and feature a wide range of music. 90% of the time, you've never heard of the artists performing... but I have yet to go to a show that wasn't AMAZING. It opens you up to this whole other world music that you may have never had access to before.

My main suggestions for the concerts is to buy your tickets online and bring blankets, snacks, and drinks with you. There is limited food available at the concert, and the seating is usually picnic style on the grass.



## Activities Outside of Cape Town

### Garden Route

The Garden Route is a long stretch of coastal roads and towns that follow South Africa's South Eastern Coastline. Starting at Mossel Bay in the west, and ending at Storms River in the east...

Bungee jumping, lion tracking, hiking, skydiving, relaxing spas, and the list goes on. It's what makes the Garden Route so popular.



### Safaris

South Africa is known for having some phenomenal game reserves and these reserves range from small private parks that act like a large zoo, to wild open parks where the animals roam freely.

**Kruger National Park is a great option.**

My number one piece of advice. Do your research! Every game reserve is different, and knowing what you want to get out of your safari will dictate which company and park you go to.

If you want to see certain animals or have a certain type of experience, you'll want to do some research before.

**Look into the reputations of companies.**



### Robben Island

A former prison is now available to the public for tours. You get an incredible first hand insight into what it was like being a prisoner, and show you the very cell that Nelson Mandela used to stay in.

- ✈ To get to the island you will take the ferry from the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town.
- ✈ The price for the ferry and admission is 550 Rand for adults and 300 rand for children. So about 35 bucks for adults and 20 for children.

### Wineries

Cape Town is famous for its wine culture.

- ✈ They boast a rich wine history that goes back to the late 1600's and have produced wines coveted by the royals and elites of Europe for centuries.
- ✈ Tastings are usually anywhere from 25 to 150 rand, or \$2 to \$11USD and consist of 3 to 5 wines.





## Cape Town's Food

### What foods you should expect to see

- ✈ Cape Malay
- ✈ Exotic Meats (Ostrich, Kudu, Spring Bok, etc.)
- ✈ Food brought to South Africa from other cultures through colonization
- ✈ What formats are popular?
  - South African Braai (BBQ)
  - Wine Culture

### Exotic Game

This includes crocodile, Kudu, Springbok, Wildebeest, Ostrich, and other large and small game.

### Cape Malay

Cape Malay is a fusion of traditional South African, Malaysian, and Eastern influences. It's a fusion of stews, roasts, spicy curries, and chutneys.

- ✈ Best place to try it
  - The most iconic places to try this cuisine is the Bo-Kaap neighborhoods

### Braai (BBQ)

The term braai evolved from the word "braden" which means roast in Dutch.

Which was then turned into braaivleis Which is Afrikaans for grilled meat, and then into the verb braai which means "to grill".

You can Braai everything from kebabs, to marinated chicken, pork and lamb chops, steaks, sausages, grilled vegetables.

### Wine in Cape Town

Today you'll find Cape Town synonymous with good wine, with stores all over the world selling Cape made reds, whites, and roses.

- ✈ Famous Wines
  - Constantia: Sweet wine
  - Pinotage: Pinot Noir and Cinsault grapes
- ✈ Wine Tour
  - Transportation
    - Drive yourself
    - Uber
    - Wine train

The cost for the wine tram is 260 rand per person, and that doesn't include the cost of the tastings.

- ✈ Best wineries
  - Jordan Wine Estate
  - Spier Wine Farm
  - Haute Cabriere Cellar Restaurant
  - Franschhoek Wine Tram
  - Boschendal Wine Estate
  - Delheim Wine Estate

More can be found in the [map](#) that comes with this course

### Great spots to go to

- ✈ **The Lawn:** Amazing trendy sunset and dinner or drink spot
- ✈ **Kloof Street House:** Cool Hip Drink/ Restaurant
- ✈ **Best Weekend Markets:** The Old Biscuit Mill and the Oranjezicht City Farm Market
- ✈ **Best Sunset Lookout Spot:** Signal Hill
- ✈ **Great Beach to Checkout (Outside the Ones we mentioned):** Llandudno Beach
- ✈ **Great Coffee Shop Chain Found In the City:** Bootlegger Coffee Co.
- ✈ **Grocery Stores:** Woolworths (Basically Whole Foods), Spar, and Checkers



Braai



Spier Wine Farm

