



CAPE TOWN

GO WHERE THE LOCALS GO IN THE WORLD'S BEST CITY

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Pics **Supplied**



MUST DO'S

- ☐ Journey to Robben Island Museum, a symbol of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity
- ☐ Shop, dine and enjoy entertainment at the V&A Waterfront
- ☐ Ascend via the Cableway to the top of Table Mountain, a New 7 Wonder of Nature
- ☐ Explore the splendour of Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, 'Africa's most beautiful garden'
- ☐ Discover Cape Point, the most southwestern tip of Africa
- ☐ Savour award-winning wine at South Africa's oldest wine-producing farm, Groot Constantia

Cape Town is the best city in the world right now, Time Out declared earlier this year. It's got all the good things: natural beauty, cultural and culinary offerings, good vibes, fabulous beaches, sunny tidal pools, forests, mountains – you get the picture.

All this makes it a tourist favourite and it gets very busy in parts (don't try to drive along the Camps Bay strip in December). But there are spaces and things to do and see and learn, that are not on every tourist's map.

If you've got a week in Cape Town, what should you do? We get the low-down from those who know the city better than most. Without hesitation, they say 'mountain, city, beach'.



Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden



SA Tourism

Cape Minstrels

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Table Mountain Cableway



'Get your bearings first with a peninsula tour or Table Mountain walk,' says Natural Wanderers' Matthew Sterne. Their Mountain-to-Sea Adventure is our tick-all-the-boxes choice. It's a private four-hour walking tour on lesser-explored paths. You get fynbos, forests, beach and sea, and views.

All the while, the guide tells you the history and legends of Cape Town, from indigenous heroes to modern-day icons. It ends with an e-scooter ride along the Sea Point Promenade.

Culture Connect, Natural Wanderers and ABCD Travel offer tours, walks and cultural experiences in less-explored places. Natural Wanderers focuses on history, and wine. Matthew has an incredible knowledge of his city, and his walks are an absolute joy; they take you deep into the complex, multiracial history of the Cape.

Sit down or get up and dance

For wining, dining, theatre, music and everything outright fun, Eat. Play. Drink. Cape Town is your go-to. Bianca Lee Coleman has spent years in her home city diving in to all that it offers. She says: 'There's not much live music these days, but Stardust is good for eating, theatre and music all in one package.' Yep, as this suggests, it's a restaurant (Mediterranean inspired with a South African twist) where the super-talented waiters are the actors and performers who put on a play or concert over dinner.

There's also frequent live music at Café Roux in Noordhoek and Woodstock Brewery in Woodstock. At the twice a week Down to Earth market at Timour Hall Villa in Plumstead, there's music, interesting food and happy people. Cool vibes and cool tunes are guaranteed at The Commons in

Muizenberg, which means you can surf in the afternoon and groove in the evening.

For theatre, Theatre on the Bay in Camps Bay and The Baxter in Rondebosch never let you down. Check the Eat. Play. Drink. Cape Town website to see what's on when you're in town.

Bianca's also got a hotline to all the best restaurants – the fine dining ones and the casual-does-excellent-food ones. For starters, Chorus at Waterkloof Wine Estate in the Helderberg or The Wes Bistro and Bar. And Rapt for ice-cream made right in front of you.

Fly me away

'You must see and experience the "standard" tourist attractions (Table Mountain, V&A Waterfront, Kirstenbosch, et cetera),' says Mike White, co-founder and pilot-guide of Africa Sky Runners, who lives the spirit of adventure. And then you must go adventuring.

Book an Africa Sky Runners scenic flight around the Cape Peninsula, following the coastline. A particularly spectacular sight is Cape Point from the air. You also get an aerial view of Robben Island and the perfect profile perspective of Table Mountain.

If you're really adventurous – and this is worth it, trust us – choose the Tankwa Experience, a less-than-24-hour overnight escape from the city and immersion in the



Robben Island

Tankwa Karoo, an extraordinary place. 'A party at the nearby Onverklaarbaar, an authentic and eccentric bar, is also on the cards for those ready for another type of adventure,' Mike says.



V&A Waterfront

Beaching

Go to Boulders in Simon's Town to see the penguins. They're super-cute and critically endangered. But they also smell super-bad. It's part of Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), so there is an entrance fee.

Water's Edge is the beach for the day in this neck of the woods. The small, protected cove is something of a secret. It's safe for swimming, with boulders to jump off, and the rock pools are good for snorkelling.

On the Atlantic Seaboard, skip the in-crowds of Clifton and Camps Bay, and instead go to Oudekraal Beach. It's small, it's beautiful, it's off the average tourist's radar. Again, it's safe for swimming and great for snorkelling, and again it's part of the TMNP and has an entrance fee.

Swimming can also be done at the many tidal pools stretching from Camps Bay to Simon's Town. They're popular, though. An excellent alternative (it's streets ahead of anything else) is Venus Pool in Cape Point, which means an entrance fee. But worth it: Venus Pool is probably the most astonishing tidal pool anywhere. There's a short, flat walk of one kilometre to get there. Take sea shoes, or any shoes that can get wet, because the urchins are prickly. Take umbrellas for the sun; there is no shade. Take water; there are no ablutions or taps. It's advisable not to take food; it attracts the big chacma baboons that live in the park.

See the sun set/moon rise

The best spot to watch the sun set over the Atlantic and the moon rise is Lion's Head, but it is very popular and is quite the hike if you're not used to such things. But there are other, less populated – and less daunting – places. Signal Hill is terrific, and there's no walking required. You just drive up and have a picnic at the top. But if you want to put in a little effort, go for Kloof Corner.

More an early bird? Buntu Matole at ABCD Travel is your guy. 'My favourite thing to do in Cape Town is a sunrise hike up Lion's Head. The climb is just the right balance of adventure and effort,' he says.



Cape Point Lighthouse



Oudekraal Beach



Salt River Street Art

Tour the town

Kate Crane Briggs at Culture Connect says the Company's Garden gives a good understanding of why Cape Town developed as a refreshment station. It's also surrounded by excellent museums – the Iziko National Gallery, the Iziko South African Museum, the Holocaust Museum and the Cape Town Labour Corps Memorial, which commemorates the Black soldiers who died in the first world war.

In the Bo-Kaap, make an appointment to visit Chandler House, where artist Michael Chandler has his studio. It's good for souvenirs, too. Art is Kate's niche, and her walks take in street art in Salt River and in the East City. Union House, the home of the Spier Art Trust, is here. It champions Black artists and designers who haven't had the means to go to an art college. There's fine art beading, mosaic studio and exhibition space. Also in the East City is Church Square and the Groote Kerk. Stop in at Labotessa for coffee, lunch or cocktails. Next door, Ramenhead sates your craving for Japanese food.

...and the township

Khayelitsha is the biggest township in Cape Town – and the biggest single township in South Africa. You would be remiss to visit the city and not visit Khayelitsha.

This is where ABCD Travel is your friend. They do walking, jogging, and cycling trips around the township – and several cultural experiences. Throw in their Party Experience and Cooking with a Local Family and you'll leave a satisfied customer.

For insight into African traditional healing, ABCD Travel offers a guided visit to a sangoma (spiritual healer) or inyanga (herbalist) in a respectful and culturally sensitive way. To get the full experience of Khayelitsha, stay at The Spade Boutique Hotel and Spa.



Groot Constantia

Taste the grapes

A wine tasting is almost a requirement. Natural Wanderers' Constantia Wine Walk is a mix of wine, walking and some unexpected history. With access to private vineyard trails to three of the most revered wine farms in the Constantia Valley: Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia, and Buitenverwachting.

Go Wine Tasting Ekasi with ABCD Travels at Lindile Ndzaba's Khayelitsha's Finest Wines for an exclusive two-hour tasting and pairing.

An underrated counterpart for the popular Franschhoek Wine Tram? Durbanville Wine Safari takes in the Durbanville Wine Valley, which at more than 300 years old, has 11 award-winning wine estates. It's Sunset Sessions is at a secret spot on Klein Roosboom. Pour your wine and watch the sun set over Table Mountain in the distance.

There you have it: everything Cape Town, without the crowds.

* The walks are not accessible for people with disabilities, but beaches, restaurants and wine estates generally are; please check before you visit.

essentials:

What to do:

Eat.Play.Drink. Cape Town
eatplaydrink.capetown

Durbanville Wine Safari
durbanvillewinesafari.com

Table Mountain National Park
(some gates are cashless).
sanparks.org/parks/table-mountain/rates-entry-fees



For domestic flights within
South Africa, contact
South African Airways
<https://www.flysaa.com/>

What to do:

Natural Wanderers
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