

Welcome to Cape Town & the Garden Route

*The Mother City, home to soaring
Table Mountain, golden beaches
and bountiful vineyards, is an old
pro at capturing people's hearts.*

Natural Wonders

Table Mountain National Park defines the city. The flat-topped mountain is the headline act, but there are many other equally gorgeous natural landscapes within the park's extensive boundaries. Cultivated areas, such as the historic Company's Gardens, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and Green Point Park, also make exploring the city a pleasure. Follow the lead of locals by taking full advantage of the abundant outdoor space. Learn to surf; go hiking or mountain biking; tandem paraglide off Lion's Head; abseil off the top of Table Mountain – these are just a few of the many activities on offer.

Design Delights

The World Design Capital 2014 is in the process of using innovative design to transform the city. It's already one good-looking metropolis, from the brightly painted facades of the Bo-Kaap and the bathing chalets of Muizenberg to the Afro-chic decor of its restaurants and bars, and the striking street art and innovation incubators of The Fringe and Woodstock. The shack communities of the Cape Flats are a sobering counterpoint, but even in these deprived suburbs there are enterprising projects that put food from organic market gardens on tables, or stock gift shops with attractive souvenirs.

Proudly Multicultural

Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and traditional African beliefs coexist in this proudly multicultural city. Given South Africa's troubled history, such harmony has been hard won and remains fragile: practically everyone has a fascinating, sometimes heartbreaking story to tell. It's a city of determined pioneers – from the Afrikaner descendants of the original Dutch colonists and the majority coloured community to the descendants of European Jewish immigrants and more recent Xhosa (isiXhosa) migrants from the Eastern Cape. They all bring unique flavours to Cape Town's rich Creole melting pot.

Beyond the City

Wrenching yourself away from the magnetic mountain and all the delights of the Cape Peninsula is a challenge, but within an hour you can exchange urban landscapes for the charming towns, villages and bucolic estates of Winelands destinations such as Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. Hermanus is a prime whale-watching location and also a base from which to organise shark-cave diving. Further afield, the delights of the Garden Route unfold with more inspiring scenery to be viewed on thrilling drives down the coast and over mountain passes.



Why I Love Cape Town

By Simon Richmond, Author

Mother Nature surpassed herself when crafting the Mother City. Whether jogging along Sea Point Promenade, climbing up Lion's Head in the dawn light, clambering over giant boulders at Sandy Bay or driving the amazing coastal roads down to Cape Point, I never fail to feel my spirits soar as I take in the breathtakingly beautiful vistas. You don't need to break a sweat; sipping wine on a historic farm in Constantia or enjoying a picnic at an outdoor concert in Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens are equally memorable ways to commune with Cape Town's great outdoors.

For more about our authors, see p288.