



# Cape Town

POP 3.74 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chef's Warehouse & Canteen (p77)
- ➔ Hallellujah (p79)
- ➔ Ferdinando's (p79)
- ➔ La Mouette (p80)
- ➔ La Colombe (p81)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Mannabay (p73)
- ➔ Backpack (p73)
- ➔ La Grenadine (p73)
- ➔ Villa Zest (p74)
- ➔ Atlantic Point Backpackers (p74)

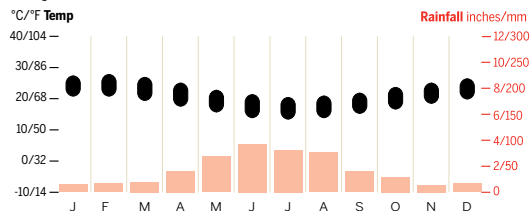
## Why Go?

Known as the 'Mother City' for its historical role in the development of modern South Africa, Cape Town is dominated by magnificent Table Mountain, its summit draped with cascading clouds, its flanks coated with unique flora and vineyards, its base fringed by golden beaches. Few cities can boast such a wonderful national park at their heart or provide the wide range of adventurous activities that take full advantage of it.

Cape Town is using some of the lessons learned during its stint as World Design Capital during 2014 to transform the city and the quality of life of its population. From the brightly painted facades of the Bo-Kaap and the bathing chalets of Muizenberg to striking street art and the Afro-chic decor of countless guesthouses, this is one good-looking metropolis. Above all it's a multicultural city where everyone has a fascinating, sometimes heartbreaking story to tell. When the time comes to leave, you may find your heart breaking too.

## When to Go

### Cape Town



**Jan** Peak season but also a chance to see the Minstrel Carnival.

**Mar** Enjoy arts events such as Infecting the City and the International Jazz Festival.

**Nov** Spring sees beautiful flowers begin to bloom and the start of sunset concerts at Kirstenbosch.

## History

Long before the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) established a base here in 1652, the Cape Town area was settled by the San and Khoekhoen nomadic tribes, collectively known as the Khoe-San. The indigenous peoples shunned the Dutch, so the VOC was forced to import slaves from Madagascar, India, Ceylon, Malaya and Indonesia to deal with the colony's chronic labour shortage. Women were in even shorter supply, so the Europeans exploited the female slaves and the local Khoe-San for both labour and sex. In time the slaves also intermixed with the Khoe-San. The offspring of these unions formed the basis of sections of today's coloured population and also helps explain the unique character of the city's Cape Muslim population.

Under the 150-odd years of Dutch rule, Kaapstad, as the Cape settlement became known, thrived and gained a wider reputation as the 'Tavern of the Seas', a riotous port used by every sailor travelling between Europe and the East. Following the British defeat of the Dutch in 1806 at Bloubergstrand, 25km north of Cape Town, the colony was ceded to the Crown on 13 August 1814. Cape Town continued to prosper after the slave trade was abolished in 1808, and all slaves were emancipated in 1833.

The discovery and exploitation of diamonds and gold in the centre of South Africa from the 1870s led to rapid changes. Cape Town was soon no longer the single dominant metropolis in the country, but as a major port it too was a beneficiary of the mineral wealth that laid the foundations for an industrial society. The same wealth led to imperialist dreams of grandeur on the part of Cecil John Rhodes (premier of the Cape Colony in 1890), who had made his millions at the head of De Beers Consolidated Mines.

An outbreak of bubonic plague in 1901 was blamed on the black African workers (although it actually came on boats from Argentina) and gave the government an excuse to introduce racial segregation: blacks were moved to two locations, one near the docks and the other at Ndabeni on the eastern flank of Table Mountain. This was the start of what would later develop into the townships of the Cape Flats.

## Sights

Cape Town's commercial centre, known as the City Bowl, is bounded by Table Mountain and the suburbs of Bo-Kaap to the west, Gardens to the south, and East City, District Six and Woodstock to the east.

Moving west around the Atlantic Coast you'll first hit the Waterfront and Green Point. From Sea Point (which has an excellent outdoor swimming pavilion), you can head down to Clifton and Camps Bay. The road then hugs the coast for a thrilling drive to the fishing community of Hout Bay, which has a good beach and a harbour with boat trips.

The city sprawls quite a distance to the north and east across the Cape Flats. To the south, skirting the eastern flank of the mountains, are the leafy, wealthy Southern Suburbs. Apart from the large Cape of Good Hope section of Table Mountain National Park, the southern tip of the peninsula includes the small seaside communities of Muizenberg, Kalk Bay and Simon's Town, the main base for South Africa's navy.

## City Bowl & Surrounds

### ★ Castle of Good Hope

MUSEUM

(Map p50; [www.castleofgoodhope.co.za](http://www.castleofgoodhope.co.za); cnr Castle & Darling Sts, City Bowl, entrance on Buitenkant St; Mon-Sat adult/child R30/15, Sun adult/child R25/10; ☎9am-4pm; 📄; 🏰 Castle) Built by the Dutch between 1666 and 1679 to defend Cape Town, this stone-walled pentagonal castle remains the headquarters for the Western Cape military command. There are free guided **tours** of the site (11am, noon and 2pm Monday to Saturday), and don't miss climbing up to the bastions for an elevated view of the castle's layout and across to Grand Parade.

The **Military Museum** is interesting, as are the displays of antiques and decorative arts in the **William Fehr Collection** (Map p50; [www.iziko.org.za](http://www.iziko.org.za); ☎9am-4pm; 🏰 Castle).

### ★ Company's Gardens

GARDENS

(Map p50; City Bowl; ☎7am-7pm; 🏡 Dorp/Leeuwen) These shady green gardens, which started as the vegetable patch for the Dutch East India Company, are a lovely place to relax. They are planted with a fine collection of botanical specimens from South Africa and the rest of the world, including frangipanis, African flame trees, aloes and roses.