

THE CAPE

Stopping for lunch at a boutique vineyard, finding a table under a shady tree, temptingly spread with fine food and chilled wine, it is difficult to believe that this is Africa. Yet the gourmet offerings, clear air and spectacular scenery are all intrinsic Cape qualities.

Whether you're seeking to relax, explore or escape, the Cape has much to offer. The more adventurous can hike through unique mountain fynbos in the craggy Cederberg Mountains or search for wild, black-maned lion in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, but most come here seeking the good life on a gentle coastal trip: idyllic landscapes, comfortable hotels, good food and fine wine. For them the range is endless, from old manor houses to top hotels throughout the wine region and the length of the Garden Route.

With a family run B&B or luxury hotel around every corner, The Cape has a greater range of accommodation than anywhere else that we feature in Africa. Consequently, we don't try to offer everything here. Instead, we have hand-picked a range of excellent hotels and small guesthouses that we know from experience, and are confident in recommending.

With these we've included some interesting game lodges. These can't offer an experience to compete with those in Botswana or further north, but do make for a very comfortable introductory safari which, being malaria-free, are a favourite with young families.

It's easy to combine a few days in the Cape with a trip to Namibia, Botswana or even Mozambique. The more adventurous might use Cape Town and Windhoek as gateways for longer fly-drives, flying into one and leaving from the other – the choice is entirely yours.

WINELANDS

Page 45 A scenic area of mountains and vineyards, dotted with welcoming retreats. Visit for the day from Cape Town, or stay for a few nights to enjoy the Cape Dutch architecture, first-class wine tasting and great food.

CAPE TOWN

Page 44 A beautiful, cosmopolitan city that is African and yet very European. Stay at least 4–5 nights; there's a lot to see and do, from shopping and restaurants, to hiking around beaches and mountains.

HERMANUS

Page 45 Africa's top spot for whale-watching (best July–Nov), by boat or from scenic cliffs. Nature-lovers also seek out Grootbos for first-rate insights into the Cape's unique flora and fauna.

AUGRABIES FALLS

Page 51 At the southern end of the Kalahari's sands, this starkly beautiful park surrounds the Augrabies Falls and its gorge. Come for some gentle game-viewing, lovely walking and excellent birdwatching.

KGALAGADI

Page 50 This huge, offbeat transfrontier park, amidst red Kalahari dunes, is ideal for self-drive enthusiasts who want a no-frills safari. Great cheetah, lion and meerkat sightings.



NAMAQUALAND

Page 49 Vast fynbos veld (open moorlands) are quiet for most of the year, but burst into life during the flower season (Aug–Sept); the Cederberg Mountains offer great hiking in the south.



View of Table Mountain and Cape Town below, from Signal Hill

Approximate Distances/Driving Times

Distances within the Cape are not huge and the vast majority of roads are very good tar, so it's quick and easy to get around here. Your driving times around the Cape depend largely on how busy the roads are, as well as the distances. Typical rough distances and guide times would be:

Cape Town to Stellenbosch.....	50km:	1 hour
Cape Town to Paarl.....	60km:	1 hour 10 mins
Cape Town to Hermanus.....	100km:	1 hour 45 mins
Cape Town to Springbok.....	560km:	5 hours 30 mins
Cape Town to Swellendam.....	220km:	2 hours 30 mins
Cape Town to George.....	440km:	5 hours
Cape Town to Knysna.....	500km:	6 hours
Swellendam to Knysna.....	270km:	3 hours 30 mins
Knysna to Port Elizabeth.....	270km:	3 hours 30 mins
Springbok to Upington.....	395km:	4 hours
Upington to Twee Rivieren.....	260km:	3 hours



Warthog watching tourists in Addo Elephant Park

South Africa: the Facts

- Currency:** The South African rand is the currency. Exchange travellers' cheques and foreign currency at banks. Credit cards are widely accepted. At time of writing £1=ZAR12
- Visas:** Travellers with British passports do not need visas.
- Health:** Several vaccines are sensible (typhoid, polio and tetanus), though none are required. Malaria is normally restricted to Mpumalanga and the northern and eastern sections of the country, but always check the latest information with your doctor.
- Language:** English is one of 11 official languages and is widely spoken.
- Food:** High-quality food is inexpensive.
- Climate:** See page 14 for comments on climate and when to visit the Cape.
- Driving:** Distances in the southern Cape are small and you drive on the left. The roads are generally well signposted and almost all are tarmac.

GAME PARKS

Page 48 Malaria-free, child-friendly safari parks offering a taste of 'the big five'. First-time visitors to Africa often spend 2-3 nights here either on affordable self-drive trips or at luxurious, all-inclusive lodges.

THE GREAT KAROO



GARDEN ROUTE

Pages 46-47 A compact coastal belt between the warm Indian Ocean and rugged mountain ranges. Numerous cosy hideaways and smarter hotels are dotted amongst lovely beaches, verdant forests and small, bustling towns.