

Things to do in Cape Town (<http://www.timeout.com/cape-town/features/407/20-great-things-to-do-in-cape-town>)

Hop on hop of City Tour / V&A Waterfront / Cape of Good Hope / Table Mountain / Winelands

1. Catch a cable car up Table Mountain...

...then abseil back down. If you fancy following a rope 112 metres down Table Mountain (and we'd recommend it as the world's highest commercial abseil even if it wasn't for the views), then Abseil Africa (297 Long Street, 021 424 4760, www.abseilafrica.co.za) is your best bet. The less adventurous can catch the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway up... and back down. The quick ride will give you a bird's eye view of the City Bowl. The summit can also be reached on foot through a multitude of beautiful albeit exhausting, trails.

2. Dive into shark-infested waters

Just when you thought it was safe to go into the water... South Africa has an incredibly diverse shark population. A quarter of the world's shark species (98 to be precise) dwell in South African waters and around 40 of these call the waters around Cape Town home.

Adrenalin junkies will want to make the 175-kilometre (110-mile) journey to Gansbaai, the white shark capital of the world. Shark cage diving is big business here and the tourism bureau endorses a whopping eight companies. Most charge around R1,100 for a session, but offer different packages (refreshments, shuttle service to and from Cape Town and so on).

Alternatively, take the safer option and visit the Two Oceans Aquarium. The I&J Predator Tank is the pièce de résistance, with its mob of ocean predators, including ragged tooth sharks, blue stingrays and black mussel crackers, all drifting together in seeming harmony – until feeding time, that is (3pm).

3. Get the gastronomy juices flowing

Cape Town's best gastronomy is to be found dotted around the central city. Try Jardine for pared down, subtle flavours (dishes might include tender Chalmers beef fillet with oxtail, and tomatoey West Coast crayfish risotto), Bizerca Bistro for bistro classics with a fresh twist brought to you by award-winning chef Laurent Deslandes, or La Colombe, where chef Luke Dale-Roberts wows foodies from across the globe with the likes of springbok medallions with celeriac purée in a rich port and truffle sauce.

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4. Take a lesson in South African history

Robben Island and the District Six Museum are must-visits for anyone interested in South Africa's period of apartheid, which came to an end in 1990.

The fascinating and inspirational Robben Island is a symbol both of centuries of cruel oppression and the triumph of hope. It has become synonymous with the former leader of the free and democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela, who spent 18 years in its maximum security prison.

The award-winning community museum, District Six lays bare the time when the ruling government declared the area 'whites only' and over 60,000 of its residents were forcibly taken from their homes and shipped out to the Cape Flats, before their houses were reduced to rubble.

5. Walk a Museum Mile

Running straight as an arrow down the leafy haven of Company's Gardens (a symbolic silent bell stands testimony to the slaves who once toiled in this former vegetable garden) is the oak-lined pedestrian strip of Government Avenue, providing access to Adderley Street, the National Gallery (with permanent and temporary exhibitions showcasing South African art spanning the centuries, as well as the occasional retrospectives of the likes of Picasso and Marelene Dumas), Houses of Parliament (buildings which have seen their fair share of action though the years), the Iziko Museum (home to the animal kingdom in taxidermy form), the Iziko Planetarium (which covers all things celestial), and the Iziko Slave Lodge (built by the Dutch East India Company to house up to 9,000 slaves, convicts and the mentally ill).

6. Drink in the Long Street vibe

Long Street is the place for partying: bars like Julep (one of Cape Town's best-kept secrets, with bare brick walls, comfy couches and a spectacular selection of cocktails) and the Waiting Room (a cosy, unpretentious bar with retro chairs and lighting of the kind that your granny might have had. There's also a stunning roof deck for hanging out on those hot summer nights), while Neighbourhood has a laid-back feel and a vast balcony from which to watch the goings-on on the street below.



7. Waddle down to a penguin colony

Enjoy some beach time with the endearing jackass penguins (so-called because of their unrefined singing voices that resemble those of braying jackasses) who call the African Penguin Colony at Boulder's Beach home. For R5 extra, you can spy on slippery sea life or beach babes through the binoculars dotting the walkway.

8. Toast the Cape Winelands

It's only an hour's drive from Cape Town – though it's a very scenic hour – but the famous Cape Winelands feel like a different world. There are rolling vineyards, towering mountains, historic wine estates and more than enough wine to keep even the thirstiest old soak satisfied.

Cape wine enjoys an impressive reputation, and the Winelands are home to most of South Africa's premier wine estates. The good news is that nearly every farm and estate in the area offers wine-tasting: you'll need a designated driver, though.

Paarl, Franschhoek and Stellenbosch are the largest, nearest and most famous towns in the region.

9. Go to the heart of the art scene

At the foot of Devil's Peak, the tattered suburb of Woodstock is fast becoming Cape Town's new art centre. Worn Victorian buildings are getting new licks of paint, while derelict warehouses are being transformed into swish art galleries. Not too long ago the area's gang-ridden reputation branded it a no-go territory for the affluent. Today, the gallery names lining the streets read like a who's-who of the local contemporary art scene.

10. Sip the best afternoon tea in the world

Get ready to arch your pinky: the Mount Nelson Hotel, known by locals as the Pink Palace, boasts the best afternoon tea in the world – and a host of international foodies and travel writers agree.

