

SOUTH AFRICA · FOOD · WINE · WILDLIFE · HIKING · BEACHES · ROAD TRIPS

Cape Town & the Western Cape

Cape Town combines Table Mountain, Atlantic beaches and penguins with excellent-value wine country an hour inland, and the rand makes eating out cheap for UK visitors. There is no jet lag: South Africa is one or two hours ahead of the UK. November to March is warm and dry; June to August brings rain, but also whales at Hermanus.

 Read the UK government's travel advice for South Africa and entry requirements before you go.

 COUNTRY South Africa	 BEST TIME Nov–Mar	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 11h 30m direct ~£650–£1,500 return	 DAILY BUDGET £45–£230 ££ Moderate
 WARMEST MONTH January (27°C)	 SEA TEMPERATURE 14–17°C coolest–warmest	 TIME ZONE Johannesburg +1h vs UK now	 CURRENCY South African rand £1 ≈ ZAR 21.92

A first trip usually splits a week to ten days between Cape Town itself and the winelands, with a day looping the Cape Peninsula to Cape Point and Boulders Beach. Stay on the Atlantic seaboard for sunsets and restaurants, or in the City Bowl for easy access to everything. Stellenbosch and Franschhoek suit food lovers, and many drive on along the coast to Hermanus or the Garden Route. The south-easter wind, the 'Cape Doctor', can blow for days between November and February, and the Atlantic stays cold at around 14–17°C; False Bay beaches such as Muizenberg are several degrees warmer.

Highlights

- 1

NATURE

Table Mountain

The rotating cableway reaches the flat summit in minutes, or hikers take two to three hours up Platteklip Gorge. Go on the first clear, calm morning of your trip, as wind or cloud often closes the cableway at short notice.
- 2

WILDLIFE

Boulders Beach and Cape Point

A colony of critically endangered African penguins nests among granite boulders near Simon's Town, viewed from boardwalks. Continue south to Cape Point's lighthouse and cliffs, returning over Chapman's Peak Drive for the classic Atlantic views.
- 3

HISTORY

Robben Island

Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison on this island, and tours include his cell in the maximum-security block. Ferries leave from the V&A Waterfront; trips take about three and a half hours and are cancelled in rough seas.
- 4

FOOD

Stellenbosch and Franschhoek winelands

Historic Cape Dutch estates under rugged mountains, about an hour from the city, with tastings that cost far less than in Europe. Franschhoek's hop-on, hop-off wine tram removes the need for a designated driver.

5

WILDLIFE

Hermanus whale watching

Southern right whales calve in Walker Bay, often within a few hundred metres of the cliff path, from about June to November, with September and October the peak. Hermanus is roughly 90 minutes' drive from Cape Town.

Where to stay

WHERE TO STAY

City Bowl and Gardens

Central, good-value guesthouses on the slopes below Table Mountain, close to the Kloof Street restaurants; suits first-timers who want quick access to everything.

WHERE TO STAY

Camps Bay and Sea Point

Atlantic-facing apartments and hotels with sunset views and a seafront promenade; suits couples and runners, though the sea is too cold for most swimmers.

WHERE TO STAY

Kalk Bay and Muizenberg

A False Bay fishing harbour and surf beach with warmer water and a slower pace; suits families and surfers, and is close to Boulders and Cape Point.

WHERE TO STAY

Stellenbosch

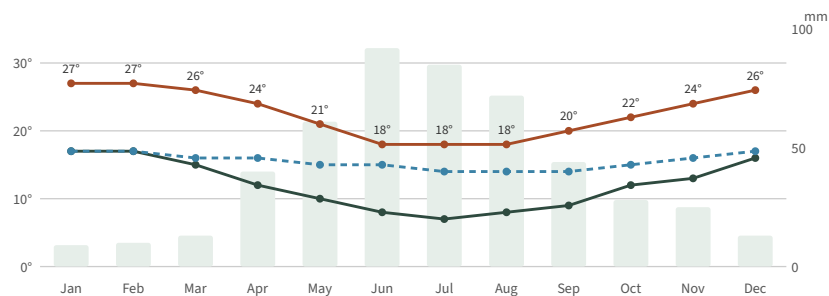
University town with oak-lined streets and dozens of wine estates within a short drive; suits food and wine lovers who want to escape the city.

When to go to Cape Town & the Western Cape

Best time: **Nov–Mar**.

**Average climate in Cape Town**

High °C Low °C Sea °C Rain (mm)

**How much does Cape Town & the Western Cape cost?**

SHOESTRING

£45

per person / day
≈ ZAR 987

MID-RANGE

£100

per person / day
≈ ZAR 2,192

COMFORTABLE

£230

per person / day
≈ ZAR 5,043

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £650 off-peak and £1,500 in school holidays.

Visas & entry for Cape Town & the Western Cape

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit South Africa without a visa for up to 90 days for business or tourism.

Check the expiry date of your visa or entry stamp and ensure you do not overstay.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Cholera

Hepatitis B

Measles

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

Malaria risk varies across the country

- There is a risk of malaria in the low altitude areas of Mpumalanga and Limpopo particularly those bordering Mozambique, Eswatini and Zimbabwe; this includes the Kruger National Park: antimalarial tablets recommended.
- There is a low risk of malaria in the far northeast of KwaZulu-Natal and in designated areas of Mpumalanga, Limpopo during the transmission season, September to May: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is a very low risk of malaria in designated areas of northeast KwaZulu-Natal during the transmission season, September to May: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.

This information covers the whole country; check with a travel health professional whether Cape Town & the Western Cape itself is affected.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in South Africa

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Wed 4 Nov 2026

Local Government Elections

Wed 16 Dec 2026	Day of Reconciliation
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Day of Goodwill
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sun 21 Mar 2027	Human Rights Day
Mon 22 Mar 2027	Human Rights Day (observed)
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Family Day
Tue 27 Apr 2027	Freedom Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Workers' Day
Wed 16 Jun 2027	Youth Day
Mon 9 Aug 2027	National Women's Day
Fri 24 Sep 2027	Heritage Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Hire a car for the peninsula and winelands, but never leave anything visible inside when parked; within the city, Uber and Bolt are cheap and widely used, especially after dark.

Book Robben Island ferries online several days ahead in summer and schedule them early in your stay, because wind cancels sailings; the same logic applies to Table Mountain's cableway.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our South Africa guide.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.