



The Chronicles of Cape Town

by Monica Kapila

One of the reasons we moved to Dubai from London was to travel more. We know Dubai is such a great travelling hub and especially good for going anywhere East, so we vowed to go to a new place at least once a year. We've done just that for the last ten years, but in February we discovered Cape Town. Now we'll have to keep going back and newer places will just have to wait! Here's why everyone should visit Cape Town.

Getting there

You can fly direct to Cape Town from Dubai on Emirates or via Johannesburg on Ethihad from Abu Dhabi. There is also a convenient Qatar airways flight via Doha. The shortest route is to travel direct on Emirates and that's still nine and half hours. But Cape Town is 2 hours behind

Dubai, so you gain some time and wake up a little earlier. That's good as there is so much to do!

Staying there

We stayed at the One and Only hotel in Cape Town and highly recommend it. It's an easy twenty minute drive from the airport and the hotel is set in front the iconic Table Mountain. We stayed in a Mountain View king room which had a balcony that overlooked the hotel lakeside and pool area. But we also had a good view of the Marina to our left. The balcony is a great place to have an early morning cup of South African Rooibush tea. The hotel is only a few minutes walk from the iconic Waterfront development.

Breakfast at the One and Only

This was an amazing meal that showcased

Cape Town's finest, fresh produce. Try the Cape Gooseberries, strawberries and blueberries. It'll be hard to get up from the outdoor terrace tables with the agapanthus growing around you. But you must in order to explore Cape Town. There is also a Nobu restaurant on the ground floor of the hotel.

Travelling Around Cape Town

We took Ubers for short distances and were happy with the service provided. Visit Woodstock, an easy fifteen minute drive away from the hotel and browse around the many artisanal shops and cafes in the development. If you book early enough, you may even be lucky to have a meal at the well known Test Kitchen, one of the Top 50 restaurants in the world! They also have a more casual cousin called Pot Luck Café that you may find easier getting a table at.

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Visiting a Vineyard or three!

Cape Town is known for its famous vineyards so you must make time to visit one. Choose from the areas of Stellenbosch or Franschoek . You don't have to do a wine tasting, you could just have lunch and tour the vineyards. I suggest visiting Tokara Vineyard and having lunch on the outdoor platform almost on top of the vineyards. You could also choose to visit Lanzerac, a more traditional vineyard or the stunning Cape Point vineyard where we had a very memorable picnic lunch, still in the mountains but with the coastline in full view.

The drive from downtown Cape Town towards the Cape Point vineyard is worth doing for the

drive alone! It's a very scenic drive that hugs the coastline and along the way you'll see incredible stretches of beach with very lively restaurants too. Try Le Caprice. Remember this side of Cape Town is bordered by the colder Atlantic Ocean, you'll need to catch a flight to George and head to Pletenburg Bay for the warmer Indian ocean!

A Standout Lunch

You cannot leave Cape Town without visiting Babylonstoren. A very pleasant fifty minute drive through rolling hillsides from Downtown if there's no traffic, Babylonstoren is a seventeenth century Dutch origin working farm, vineyard, shop and restaurant.





There are a whole host of places you can enjoy a meal and some music by the beach in Cape Town. I recommend either The Bungalow in Clifton or The Grand Café on the Grand Beach. Best would be to go to both if time allows, but expect a more remote, rugged location for a dinner or a lunch at The Bungalow.

You will be pleasantly surprised at how much your money can buy here! We had the highest quality produce for our lunch displayed in a very artistic manner. Starters, called stirrings, are split into colours so you can choose from Red, Yellow or Green. I opted for the red starters plate of gazpacho with deep fried salt and pepper squid and fresh sweet melons. This was also gluten free.

We were also offered 3 different varieties of exotic, prickly pears to sample while we were waiting. There is a big emphasis on selecting, cooking and serving the freshest seasonal produce available at Babylonstoren. But you must book well in advance for lunch here.

You can't leave without visiting the gift shop, stock up on rose scented candles, fig soaps and stunning coffee table books. But then do make time to visit the amazing gardens as well. Drive on for about 15 minutes and see the town of Franschoek and try to have dinner here if you room after your lunch!

Party with the Cape Tonians

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rugged location for a dinner or a lunch at The Bungalow. Both serve excellent seafood right on the beach front.

If you get home sick for a little mall trawling then head over to the Waterfront Mall near the One and Only. Buy some proteas from Caronline Fine Flowers, they are very experienced at packing these up for long distance travel! Your proteas will last for at least 10 days and will be a beautiful and fitting reminder of your first trip to Cape Town. Monica Kapila is the owner and founder of www.dondubaicom and the photographs are the writer's own.