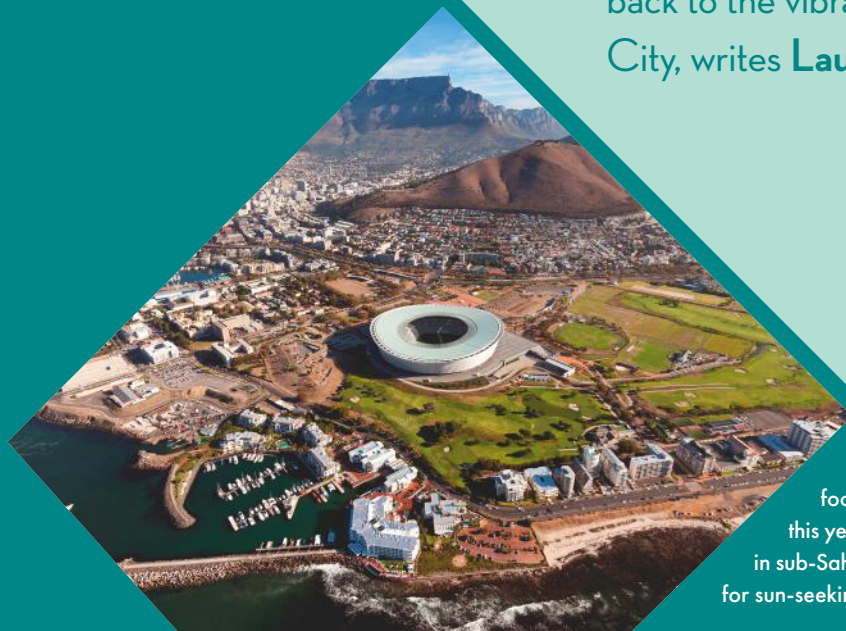


# 48 hours Cape Town

With a major flight route recently reinstated, visitors are heading back to the vibrant Mother City, writes **Laura Millar**



**i**t's the city with an unmistakable, hulking great mountain in the middle. Visible from almost every angle, Cape Town's monolithic Table Mountain has become an icon in its own right, and a symbol to everyone who visits. But there's much more to this city. Riven by a complicated and traumatic past, its history is never far from the surface. Elsewhere, its proximity to nature, world-class food and drink scene, and status as a hub for sporting events – this year has already seen it host the first Formula E race to be held in sub-Saharan Africa – make it a compelling, cosmopolitan destination for sun-seeking travellers. Here's how to spend two days in the city. ➤

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Wolffpower, minizen



ASK THE  
expert

"We were thrilled to resume our daily direct flights from London to Cape Town in November, for the first time since 2015. Even though this will only be for the winter season for the time being, we hope to be able to make it year-round eventually. Demand has been high, and we're already seeing bookings for this winter, with flights operating from October 28 through to March 30, 2024.

For clients, the appeal of the destination is multi-fold – it's perfect for winter sun, and it offers excellent value for money thanks to the exchange rate. Many major sporting events take place here, from cricket to the South Africa Sevens rugby tournament. It's also easy to combine the city with other destinations in the country: you can fly with our airline partner, Airlink, to Johannesburg or Kruger National Park, and the winelands are only an hour's drive away."

**Juha Järvinen, chief commercial officer, Virgin Atlantic**



FROM FAR LEFT:  
Boulders Beach; Constantia;  
Table Mountain and Lion's Head;  
V&A Waterfront; Camps Bay;  
Signal Hill; Robben Island; Bo-Kaap

PICTURES: South African Tourism, Shutterstock/Londe Van Hoolwerff, DragonWen, Delpixel, Jeff Rikhtso



DAY ONE

**10.00:** For an overview of the city, start with a tour on an official open-top red bus. There are several to choose from, but the Mini Peninsula tour provides a sense of the city's parameters, taking you through the affluent and leafy wine-producing suburb of Constantia to peaceful Hout Bay and its strip of seafood restaurants on Mariner's Wharf. Look out for the resident sea lions, then finish up at the picturesque Green Point Lighthouse.

**13.00:** A half-hour stroll from the lighthouse, you'll find the buzzy V&A Waterfront – one of the city's major draws for tourists and locals alike. A combination of working harbour and retail and restaurant complex, it was first established in 1988, and has seen regular redevelopment and investment since then. When it comes to lunch, you're spoilt for choice, but Harbour House offers a rooftop patio with a view down on to the boats, and a great choice of freshly caught fish

and seafood. There's everything from sushi to the fresh catch of the day, with a wine list that's heavy on local grapes.

**14.00:** Afterwards, we recommend browsing the shops. Victoria Wharf is a somewhat generic mall, so steer clients towards the innovative Watershed, an open-ended former warehouse that has won awards for its architecture, where small, independent stalls showcase high-quality local craft and design.

**15.00:** From the harbour, take the 30-minute ferry to Robben Island. Formerly a jail where Nelson Mandela was held for 18 years, it's now a museum where guided tours are given by former inmates – many of whom, like Mandela, were political prisoners protesting against apartheid. Clients will learn about the island's 500-year old history, see the quarry from which limestone was mined to build the prison's

infrastructure, and finally enter Mandela's cell. The last prisoners were released in 1991.

**18.00:** There aren't many bad places to watch the sun set in Cape Town, but a popular spot is Signal Hill. A mere hillock at 350m – compared with Table Mountain's mighty 1,086m – it nevertheless offers striking views across to its big brother, and also to the jagged peak of Lion's Head. Adrenaline-seekers will be thrilled to know you can paraglide right off the top.

**20.00:** When the sun dips below the horizon, book a wine tasting at the One&Only hotel's Wine Studio. Expert sommelier Luyo Ntezo will guide you through the best of what South Africa has to offer. Follow it with dinner at the hotel's Nobu restaurant. The Japanese-Peruvian menu features the signature black cod miso, although there are plenty of other tempting dishes, from lobster with wasabi pepper to roasted cauliflower with jalapeno dressing.

DAY TWO

**07.00:** Clear any cobwebs with a hike up Tafelberg, as Table Mountain is known in Afrikaans. There are dozens of different routes suited to all ages and fitness levels. One of the oldest, shortest and most direct is through Platteklip Gorge – a series of steep rocky tracks and stone steps that offer breathtaking views at every turn, from the azure sweep of the Atlantic Ocean to the skyscrapers clustering around Table Bay. It should take about two to three hours, but there's a reward at the top – the cafe sells cold drinks and ice creams, and it takes a matter of moments to get back down to the bottom in the revolving cable car.

**11.00:** Get up close with nature on a trip to Boulders Beach. An hour's drive from the city centre, this sheltered stretch of pale sand is home to endangered African penguins. At the far end of the beach, you might find some wandering around freely. But most of them can be observed

from a wooden boardwalk accessed by ticketed entry, where you'll see penguins in their hundreds, swimming, resting or sitting on eggs.

**13.00:** Back towards the city centre, Camps Bay is a dazzling, South Beach-like stretch of golden sand lined with bars, restaurants and hip hotels. Start with an aperitif at the Baptiste bar on the rooftop of The Marly hotel, then head to the Surfshack diner for lunch. Bag a table close to the seafront while tucking into the likes of lobster rolls, seared ahi tuna burgers and barbecued ribs – a nod to South Africa's great braai tradition.

**15.00:** Photo opportunities abound in the colourful Bo-Kaap neighbourhood, a half-hour walk from the waterfront. Formerly known as the Malay Quarter, it sits on the lower slopes of Signal Hill and comprises a series of brightly painted houses set around cobbled streets. The historical centre of Cape Malay culture in Cape Town – the Cape Malays are descended from free and enslaved Muslims, who

lived here during Dutch and British rule – it's also home to the Bo-Kaap Museum. Located in one of the first houses to be built in the area, the museum dates back to the mid-18th century and features a distinctive Cape Dutch wavy-topped facade. It showcases Islamic culture and heritage, giving a sense of some of the many different communities that have called Cape Town home.

**17.00:** To the south of the city centre, where built-up urban life gives way to rolling fields and looming hills, you'll find Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. It was set up in 1913 to preserve native plant life, and in its well-kept and laid-out grounds, you'll find examples of some of the region's most beautiful flowers and trees, including the pretty protea.

**20.00:** Head to lively Bree Street, lined with bars, restaurants and art galleries. Increasingly hailed as a must-visit foodie destination, places such as La Parada – a fun tapas bar – and Villa 47, a three-storey space serving Mediterranean cuisine,

pull in the crowds. For something a little more elevated, try refined bistro Grub & Vine. Within its red-walled, plant-filled, chequered-tiled interior, you'll find a menu featuring the likes of heritage tomato carpaccio, pan-roasted linefish with mussels and baby shrimp, and shallot tarte tatin.

**23.00:** End the night at the nearby Gin Bar on Wale Street, composed of a series of interconnected townhouses complete with an indoor courtyard that's entered through a chocolate shop. It started life in 2014 as a speakeasy where you needed a password to enter, but now it attracts a hip local crowd and serves a range of cocktails with cryptic names – think Hope, Heart, Ambition and Soul. **TW**

BOOK IT

Four nights at One&Only Cape Town with **Elegant Resorts** starts from £3,195, including flights, lounge access and private transfers, departing February 11, 2024. [elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)