

THE WILD LIFE OF THE CAPE

International News

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Cape Town is situated in one of the most extraordinary landscapes in the world. Caught between mountains and sea, cliffs and plateaus ? the city shelters in the shadow of the magnificent Table Mountain, and is licked by the surf of the Atlantic. This amazing concentration of different types of climate and terrain make for a huge wealth of flora and fauna, and is certainly one the best reasons to stay in the city.

To the east, in areas like Stellenbosch, conditions are perfect for the growing of grapes, and the wine of the region can be counted amongst the finest in the world. The reason for this is the off similarity between this particular area and those of southern France and Italy, where many of the grapes typically used have thrived in the Cape?s mimetic conditions ? leant that wonderful twist by the native African soil.

To the south of the city is the Cape itself: a twisting, cliff-lined outcrop dangling from the very bottom of the continent that dips tentatively toward Antarctica, complete with penguins scurrying around on Boulder?s Beach. On the plains of the Cape roam congresses of baboons, terrorising unsuspecting picnickers and seals alike.

The waters around the Cape are home to a huge harem of seals, who congregate on the aptly though uninspiringly named Seal Island, only to be wolfed down by a rogue Great White Shark. At the visitor centre there are some scarcely believable photos of sharks leaping ten, fifteen feet out of the water, a seal clamped in its gaping maw.

On top of Table Mountain, Rock Hyrax skit about the brush, lounging on outcrops, gazing down at the incomprehensible metropolis below. A cable car ride will provide safe descent from the top of the mountain after dark, affording you the chance to watch one of the most spectacular sunsets around. The sun seems to hiss as it dips into the ocean, and Cape Town?s lights flicker on ? just in time to explore the human element round here, over a few well-earned drinks.

When organising a trip to Cape Town, make sure you get appropriate [travel insurance](#) to cover the specifics of the trip. Flights are regular from Heathrow, and can be picked up relatively cheaply in advance. It?s an amazing place that sits on the cusp of civilisation, the roaring surf and the windswept mountains. Explore it for yourself.