

Introducing Cape Town

Good-looking, fun-loving, sporty and sociable. If Cape Town was in the dating game that's how her profile would read. And – for once – it's all true. The Mother City of South Africa occupies one of the world's most stunning locations, with an iconic mountain slap-bang in her centre.

As beautiful as the surrounding beaches and vineyards can be, it's the rugged wilderness of Table Mountain, coated in a unique flora, that grabs everyone's attention.

Long before the Dutch took a fancy to the Cape Peninsula in the 17th century, the land was home to the Khoisan people who valued the spiritual power of the mountains and their life-providing water. While the European immigrants, and the slaves they brought here, have all shaped the physical environment of South Africa's third-largest city, Table Mountain – now protected within a national park (see p66) that covers some 75% of the peninsula – remains at Cape Town's heart. This ever present backdrop is the city's adventure playground, as well as a source of legend and continuing spiritual nourishment. Under the Khoisan name of Hoerikwaggo – meaning 'Mountain in the Sea' – the national park is promoting a new series of trails that will allow visitors, for the first time, to sleep on the mountain top while hiking a world-class trail from Cape Point to the City Bowl.

Complementing the mountain's natural beauty is Cape Town's eye-catching way with design and colour in everything from the brightly painted façades of the Bo-Kaap and the Victorian bathing chalets of Muizenberg, to the contemporary Afro-chic décor of the many excellent guesthouses, restaurants and bars. The city is crammed with galleries (p164) displaying amazing artworks and shops selling wonderfully inventive craftwork. It's also getting a reputation as the fashion nexus of South Africa. This creativity seems to spring naturally from the city's multiethnic population, proof of South Africa's status as the rainbow nation and a visual record of the country's tumultuous recorded history of over 350 years.

For all the city centre's visual harmony and cosmopolitan atmosphere, you don't need to be in Cape Town for long to realise that the scars of modern South Africa's violent birth and apartheid adolescence still run deep. The wealth of Camps Bay and Constantia sits side by side with the ingrained poverty of townships, such as Khayelitsha, and the deprived coloured



LOWDOWN

Population 3.1 million

Time zone GMT plus two hours

3-star room around R800

Glass of wine R10 to R15

Shared taxi ride R3

Essential accessory Craig Native T-shirt

No-no Banging your African drum on Clifton's No 2 beach

suburbs, home to the vast majority of the city's citizens. Friendly as Capetonians can be to visitors, among themselves suspicions and misinterpretations endure, and if you take one of the deservedly popular trips into the townships (p81) you'll be a step ahead of the vast majority of locals.

Seeing life in the townships may shock and upset, but you'll also discover it's not a one-note story of grim survival. There are huge differences in lifestyle and many great examples of civic pride and optimism to balance against the shocking crime and HIV/AIDS statistics. And there's *ubuntu*, true African hospitality and care for fellow

human beings. Look across the city and you'll also see people of all skin colours working together to make Cape Town a better place for everyone. Discovering the Mother City's true diversity and spirit is all part of getting the most out of a visit here.

Reality check aside, Cape Town is an old pro at showing visitors a good time. There may not be game parks on Kruger's scale, but there are plenty of great wildlife-spotting opportunities, from the penguins at Boulders to the antelopes, buffaloes and black rhino at Solole Game Reserve. The restaurants and bars compare favourably with those of other cosmopolitan cities. There's a lively cultural scene, particularly when it comes to music, which pervades every corner of the city, and if outdoor activities and adrenaline buzzes are your thing, you've come to the right place. As local troubadour David Krammer's sing-along anthem for the Cricket World Cup has it, 'Welcome to Cape Town/Enjoy the party/Come in and have some fun/Cape Town's number one'.

The capital of Western Cape province and the parliamentary capital of the republic, Cape Town works in a way that so few cities on the African continent do. Historic buildings have been saved, businesses are booming, inner-city crime is coming under control and you'll seldom be stuck for a parking space. Factor back in those stunning mountains, magnificent surf beaches and outstanding vineyards and you'll soon discover – like many before you – that it's easy to lose track of time while exploring all the wonders of this unique Southern African city. Now don't you think it's time you made a date with Cape Town?

Cape Town Today	8
City Calendar	9
Culture	12
Identity	12
Lifestyle	14
Food & Drink	17
Fashion	18
Sport	19
Media	20
Language	20
Economy & Costs	21
Government & Politics	22
Environment	22
Climate	22
The Land	23
Green Cape Town	23
Urban Planning & Development	26

CAPE TOWN TODAY

It's a feeling that's been growing for several years, but it's now more certain than ever that Cape Town's time as the pre-eminent African city has arrived. From the reimagined, pedestrian-friendly city centre with its lovely Art Deco buildings morphing into ritzy apartments, to cutting-edge energy-efficient housing and the new R104-million shopping mall in Khayelitsha, Cape Town is on a roll, riding the crest of South Africa's steady economic growth and increasing confidence as a nation.

Yes, Capetonian life can be very lush. There are splendid beaches, the magnificence of Table Mountain National Park, the beauty of well-preserved heritage architecture, and centuries-old vineyards and their grand estates. Foreign capital continues to flock here, keeping property prices very healthy. The hippest restaurants, bars and clubs take the latest styles of New York, London and Paris and add a distinctively African twist. The local fashion, design, arts and crafts scenes are all flourishing, adding liberal dashes of colour and creativity to an already tantalisingly cosmopolitan place. You really do feel that this is the rainbow city of the rainbow nation.

For all the great aspects of Cape Town there are the pretty obvious downsides, too. 'A fool's paradise' is what the writer Rian Malan calls it; a place so seductive and attractive that it is easy to ignore the city's harder and more-violent realities. Read the shock-horror headlines of the local newspapers or, worse, make the wrong turn in one of the more-lawless suburbs of the Cape Flats, and you'll quickly discover that these realities are a lot closer to home than you might first realise while sipping cocktails at Camps Bay or shopping on the Waterfront. But then those carefree activities are just as much a part of Cape Town life as crime or AIDS. It's just one of the mildly perplexing, always fascinating contradictions of life in the Mother City.

Life may be tough for much of the city's population, but you only have to spend some time in the townships to realise that it might not be quite so uniformly awful as depicted by the broad brush strokes of the media. Huge strides have been made to get people out of the shacks of the 'informal settlements' into formal housing, with the ANC-led city council of the past few years pouring millions of rands into building programmes in the townships; the Khayelitsha Business District and the N2 Gateway project are two of the most prominent examples.

The Western Cape's current African National Congress (ANC) premier is Ebrahim Rasool, a practising Muslim whose family was moved out of District Six (see p60) when he was 10. His appointment has given a much-needed boost to the self-confidence of Cape Town's majority coloured population. He's providing a role model in a country where there is still much distrust and even hostility between blacks and coloureds, who were pitted against each other under apartheid.

Rasool also epitomises the tolerant, inclusive side of Islam that pervades Cape Town, making it a beacon of hope in a world where religious beliefs are increasingly radicalised.

TOP FIVE QUIRKY HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

- Dance in the streets with lively jazz music and many shiny satin suits at the Cape Town New Year Carnaval (opposite).
- Watch the multicoloured aerial show of the Cape Town International Kite Festival (p11), as good a reason as any to spend a breezy day down in Muizenberg.
- See the dogs come out in honour of Simon's Town's naval mascot at the Just Nuisance Great Dane Parade (p10).
- Fall in love with those cute black-and-white birds down near Simon's Town during the Penguin Festival (p11).
- Get dressed up for Mother City Queer Project (p143), the hottest dance event of the year with compulsory fancy dress.

CITY CALENDAR

Events and celebrations are a regular part of Cape Town life. For a full rundown check with **Cape Town Tourism** (www.tourismcapetown.co.za). See p148 for details of Cape Town's main film festivals and p214 for a list of public holidays. The best time to visit is from December through to the end of February, when the weather is at its best and you have the chance of joining in the city's best festivals: the Cape Town New Year Carnaval and the Mother City Queer Project.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

CAPE TOWN NEW YEAR KARNAVAL

Cape Minstrel Carnival; ☎ 021-696 9538

If you haven't headed out of town, like most Capetonians do for the New Year holidays, go and see this colourful carnival held on the streets of the City Bowl and Bo-Kaap. See p10 for more information on the minstrel contests that run throughout January and early February.

STANDARD BANK CAPE TOWN JAZZATHON

☎ 021-683 2201; www.jazzathon.co.za

The largest free open-air jazz festival in South Africa runs for four days in early January at the Waterfront, drawing more than a million people to see top acts.

SPIER ARTS SUMMER SEASON

☎ 021-809 1177; www.spier.co.za

From January through to March the Spier wine estate near Stellenbosch runs a series of top-class concerts, operas and plays at its outdoor amphitheatre. Every other even year there is a sculpture exhibition in the surrounding grounds, too.

CAPE TO BAHIA YACHT RACE

☎ 021-421 1351; www.heinekencapetobahia.co.za

For the 12th running of this 3600km yacht race, held every even-numbered year, the destination was changed from Rio to Salvador in Brazil. It starts on the first week in January and draws contestants from around the world.

J&B MET

Map pp244-5
☎ 021-700 1600; www.jbmet.co.za

South Africa's richest horse race, with a jackpot of R1.5 million, is a time for big bets and even bigger hats. Head to Kenilworth Race Course to catch the action. It's generally held on the last Saturday in January.

HOT CONVERSATION TOPICS

- Tik – many are concerned about this speed-like drug's impact on the Cape Flats.
- City-centre living – time to sell up in the suburbs and buy a penthouse in the City Bowl?
- Power cuts – another spanner in the works at the Koeberg nuclear power station?
- N2 Gateway project – decent low-cost housing or a way to screen out the informal settlements?
- Firefighting – time to better reward those who fight the annual bush fires that afflict the Cape.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

A grand parade with military marching bands halts the traffic down Adderley and Parliament Sts when parliament opens, usually in the first week of February. Come to see the Members of Parliament and dignitaries in their finest outfits, and to glimpse celebrities such as Nelson Mandela.

CAPE TOWN PRIDE FESTIVAL

☎ 083 274 3579; www.capetownpride.co.za
Cape Town's gay and lesbian community flies the rainbow flag with pride during this 10-day festival in February, which includes arts events, as well as the usual dance parties, and culminates in a street parade through Green Point and the Waterkant.

DESIGN INDABA

☎ 021-418 6666; www.designindaba.com

Get ahead of the Cape Town design game at this two-day creative convention, held at the end of February (usually at the Cape Town International Convention Centre), which brings together the varied worlds of fashion, architecture, visual arts, crafts and media. It's where you'll be able to spot emerging design trends and the star designers of tomorrow.

JOIN THE MERRY MINSTRELS

The Mother City's equivalent of Rio's Mardi Gras parade is the **Cape Town New Year Karnaval** (☎ 021-696 9538). It's a noisy, joyous and disorganised affair with practically every colour of satin, sequin and glitter used in the costumes of the marching troupes, which can number over 1000 members.

Although the festival dates back to the early 19th century when slaves enjoyed a day of freedom over the New Year period, the look of today's carnival was inspired by visiting American minstrels in the late 19th century, hence the face make-up, colourful costumes and ribald song-and-dance routines. The vast majority of participants come from the coloured community (although you will notice a few black and even fewer white faces among the troupe participants).

Despite the carnival being a permanent fixture on Cape Town's calendar, in December 2005 it was threatened with cancellation. The Kaapse Karnaval Association, which represents most minstrel groups who take part in the parade, wanted an increase in the R1.3-million funding provided by the provincial government. A day before the New Year's Eve parade, it was all back on again, 'for the love of the culture and people of Cape Town,' as Faggie Carelse, association chairman, said.

Although visitors may have wondered what on earth was going on, most Capetonians weren't fazed by this turn of events. The political sideshow had played out almost the same the previous year. And those with longer memories recalled how the (now politically incorrect) Coon Carnival had always been something of a demonstration of coloured people power: whites who came to watch the parade in apartheid times would risk having their faces blacked up with boot polish.

The main parades are on New Year's Eve and 2 January, kicking off from Darling St in front of Old City Hall and culminating at Green Point Stadium (Map pp252-3). However, the actual Cape Minstrel competition, when troupes are judged on variety of criteria, including costume, singing and dancing, runs throughout January and into early February each Saturday night. If you miss the main parades, there are chances to catch the minstrels in action on these nights at Green Point Stadium, Athlone Stadium (Map pp244-5) and Vygerkraal Stadium (Map pp244-5) – it makes for a really unique Capetonian experience! Note: late-night traffic in the city centre (particularly around Whale and Adderley Sts) on these nights is hectically busy, so we advise you not to drive.

MARCH & APRIL

CAPE ARGUS PICK 'N' PAY CYCLE TOUR

☎ 083 910 6551; www.cycletour.co.za

Held on a Saturday in the middle of March, this is the world's largest timed cycling event, attracting more than 30,000 contestants. The route circles Table Mountain, heading down the Atlantic Coast and along Chapman's Peak Dr. Forget driving around town on the day.

CAPE TOWN FESTIVAL

☎ 021-465 9042; www.capetownfestival.co.za

Held throughout most of March, this arts festival covers the gamut from theatre to film and visual arts, with the aim of bringing Cape Town's communities together.

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

☎ 021-465 9042; www.capetowninternationaljazzfestival.com

Cape Town's biggest jazz event, attracting all the big names from both South Africa and overseas, is usually held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre at the end of March. It includes a free concert in Greenmarket Sq.

JUST NUISANCE GREAT DANE PARADE

☎ 021-786 5798

No, this is not an April Fools' joke. Every 1 April a dog parade is held through Jubilee Sq in Simon's Town to commemorate Able Seaman Just Nuisance, the Great Dane who was a mascot of the Royal Navy during WWII.

OLD MUTUAL TWO OCEANS MARATHON

☎ 021-671 9407; www.twooceansmarathon.org.za

Held in mid-April, this 56km marathon kicks off in Newlands on Main Rd and follows a similar route to the Pick 'n' Pay Cycle Tour around Table Mountain. It generally attracts about 9000 competitors.

MAY

CAPE GOURMET FESTIVAL

☎ 021-797 4500; www.gourmetsa.com

For two weeks from early May, Cape Town goes gourmet with various food-focused events. A highlight is the Table of Unity where a table for 700 diners of varying ethnicities is set up at the top of Table Mountain.

JULY

VODACOM COMEDY FESTIVAL

☎ 021-680 3988; www.computicket.com

Catch some of South Africa's top comedians at this festival held at various venues across town for three weeks in July.

NOKIA CAPE TOWN FASHION WEEK

☎ 021-422 0390; www.capetownfashionweek.co.za

Fashion in Cape Town is sizzling, and this event held in July is the place to catch the hottest designers' work.

AUGUST

CAPE WOW (WOMEN OF THE WORLD) FESTIVAL

☎ 021-448 7984; www.capewow.co.za

South African women get their own day of celebration on 9 August and around this time the Cape WOW arts and culture festival is held. There are lots of free events and the aim is to empower women of all ages.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

FLOWER SHOWS

www.tourismcapetown.co.za

Spring comes to the Cape in September. The wild flowers bloom, and festivals are held in their honour up and down the province; see Cape Town Tourism's website for full details.

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL

☎ 021-447 9040; www.kitefest.co.za

Held in mid-September, in support of the Cape Mental Health Society, this colourful gathering of kite enthusiasts at Zandvlei, near Muizenberg, is big, entertaining and for a good cause.

PENGUIN FESTIVAL

☎ 021-786 1758

Come celebrate those cute black-and-white birds down at Boulders, near Simon's Town, over a mid-September weekend.

CAPE ARGUS/WOOLWORTHS GUN RUN

☎ 021-511 7130

Starting from Beach Rd in Mouile Point, this popular half-marathon is the only occasion for which the Noon Gun on Signal Hill

gets fired on a Sunday – competitors try to finish the race before the gun goes off. It's generally held at the end of September.

STELLENBOSCH FESTIVAL

☎ 021-883 3891; www.stellenboschfestival.co.za

From the end of September to early October, Stellenbosch whoops it up at this celebration of music, art, food, wine, culture and local history.

HERMANUS WHALE FESTIVAL

☎ 028-313 0928; www.whalefestival.co.za

Hermanus gets into its stride as the Cape's premier whale-watching location at the end of September with this family-focused arts festival, which incorporates a range of events around town.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

MOTHER CITY QUEER PROJECT

☎ 082 885 0018; www.mcqp.co.za

Massive, must-attend gay dance party held in early December. Run yourself up a fabulous costume – you won't be let in unless you're dressed according to the theme. See p143 for details.

KIRSTENBOSCH SUMMER SUNSET CONCERTS

Map pp244-5

☎ 021-799 8783, Sat & Sun 021-761 4916;

www.nbi.ac.za; Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens,

Rhodes Dr, Newlands; adult/child incl entry to

gardens R35/10; ☎ from 5.30pm end Nov-Apr

The Sunday-afternoon concerts are a Cape

Town institution. Bring a blanket, a bottle of

wine and a picnic and join the crowds enjoy-

ing anything from arias performed by local

divas to a funky jazz combo. There's always a

special concert for New Year's Eve, too.



Drummers, Drum Cafe (p145)

CULTURE

One of Cape Town's most attractive features is its multiethnic character. The city's racial mix is different from the rest of the country. Of its population of 3.1 million, more than half are coloured; blacks account for about a third of the total, and whites and others comprise the balance. From its inception, South Africa's Mother City was a melting pot of cultures. The Dutch imported slaves from around Africa and Asia to assist them in building up the colony. Those slaves' descendants, plus what's left of the area's original inhabitants, the San and Khoikhoi (Khoekhoen), make up the city's majority coloured population today.

Cape Town's black population brings its culture to the table, too, with *sangomas* (traditional African healers) and initiation ceremonies, which are a common part of township life (see p16). There's a very prominent Muslim community (see p58) and a small but influential Jewish community (p14). Even within the white community there are distinct differences between those of British and Afrikaans heritage. Add in the gay community – which, with impeccable taste, has adopted Cape Town as its very own Mother City – and you'll begin to realise what a challenge making sense of all this can be.

IDENTITY

In this book we make use of the old apartheid terms: white, black, coloured and Indian. Although there are many people who find these terms distasteful and want to break away from the stereotypes they imply, it's a fact that in South Africa the terms are used by all the population quite often without any rancour or ill feeling. Many South Africans proudly identify themselves with one or other of these groups – for example, you'll meet black South Africans who happily refer to themselves as black rather than South Africans or Africans (which is the ANC's preferred collective expression for all people of African, Indian and mixed-race origin).

Among the millions of human stories of Cape Town, it's only to be expected that the stereotypes often come crashing down – see below and opposite for just two examples of people who have crossed the race and cultural barriers.

Coloureds

Coloureds, sometimes known as Cape coloureds or Cape Malays, are South Africans of long standing. Although many were brought to the early Cape Colony as slaves, others were political prisoners and exiles from the Dutch East Indies. People were brought from countries as far away as India and modern Indonesia, as well as other parts of Africa, but

A MAN CALLED AFRICA

'I miss the sense of community,' says Africa Melane. 'It used to take me at least 10 minutes to walk the short distance from the bus stop to my old home in Gugs (Guguletu) because I stopped to say hello to everyone. People are not so friendly here in Tamboerskloof.'

Even so, Africa, a confident, street-smart 28-year-old producer and presenter with the radio station **Cape Talk** (www.567.co.za) says he feels perfectly at ease in this still overwhelmingly white suburb of the city. How does he feel about the racial descriptors of white, black and coloured, then? 'They should be used, reused and abused all the time,' he states firmly, 'until they don't matter any more.'

Because of his trendy media job, his university education and his choice of moving into a well-established rich white suburb of Cape Town, Africa could also be labelled as a 'buppie', the black equivalent of a young urban professional (yuppie). 'I suppose I fall into that category,' he admits, 'but I hate the label because it implies that the person is superficial.' And this is certainly not something that Africa could be accused of.

While at university (where he studied accountancy) Africa taught himself about HIV and AIDS and designed workshops to train health science and medical students in how best to treat the disease in Cape Town's townships where it is rife. Although he may have left his family home, he has not left behind his Xhosa heritage. At 19 he went through the initiation rites of a young Xhosa man (see p16). He consults a *sangoma* at least once a year for both health and spiritual issues. And although he was brought up nominally as a Methodist, he believes in and pays respect to the spirits of his ancestors.

THE WHITE SANGOMA

With his bare feet, face tattoos, yellow sarong, pink string vest, beaded headbands and telephone wire belts, Chris Reid Ntombemhlophe is about as far from your average white Capetonian as you could get. In his 42 years, this son of a colonial coffee farmer in Zimbabwe has been a horse breeder, a male model and a landscape gardener. But it was when he kicked his addiction to cocaine by moving from Johannesburg (Jo'burg) to the Transkei that he found his true calling in life – as a *sangoma*, a traditional African healer.

It took Chris three and half 'difficult' years living in a village community in the Transkei to fully learn the Xhosa (isiXhosa) language and his traditional healing and divining skills, although like all *sangomas* he believes he has the calling within him. His many *inqwamba* (wrist and ankle bangles of twisted cow and goat skin) signify each of the recent sacrifices he's made during his work; the bangles stay on until they fall off, which is around a year.

Chris has practised as a *sangoma* since 1997; his clients are mostly blacks but increasingly whites and coloureds, too. 'I've even had a government minister,' says Chris who knows that many people 'must think I'm a bit off my head'. It's refreshingly honest comments like these and Chris' openness and level-headedness about what he does that convince you that it is possible for him to have a foot in both the black and white worlds of South Africa. To meet Chris you can book one of his township or botanical gardens tours through Pure Pondo Adventures (p91).

their lingua franca was Malay (at the time an important trading language), which is how they came to be called Cape Malays.

Many coloureds practise Islam, and Cape Muslim culture has survived intact over the centuries, even resisting some of the worst abuses of apartheid. The slaves who moved out with the Dutch to the hinterland, many losing their religion and cultural roots in the process, had a much worse time of it. And yet practically all the coloured population of the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces today are bound by Afrikaans, the unique language that began to develop from the interaction between the slaves and the Dutch over three centuries ago. One of the oldest documents in Afrikaans is a Quran transcribed using Arabic script.

The most public secular expression of coloured culture today is the riotous Cape Town New Year Karnaval (p10).

Blacks

Although most blacks in Cape Town are Xhosa, hailing from Eastern Cape province, they are not the only group in the city. Cape Town's economy has attracted people from all over Southern Africa, including a fair few immigrants from the rest of the continent – a lot of the car-parking marshals and traders at the city's various craft markets are from other African countries.

Xhosa culture is diverse, with many clan systems and subgroups. Politics makes for another division, with most people supporting the ANC but a sizable minority supporting the more hardline Pan-African Congress (PAC). There are also economic divisions and subgroups based on culture, such as the Rastafarian community in the Marcus Garvey district of the township of Philippi.

Whites

The culture will differ within the white community depending on whether you are a descendant of the Boers or the British. The Boers' history of geographical isolation

THE WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE ON CAPE TOWN

Jonny Steinberg's *The Number* is a hard-hitting account of Cape Town's gangland underworld and the prison system as seen through the eyes of a former gang member. Mike Nichol's *Sea-Mountain, Fire-City* is a good read if you want to get the measure of white paranoia postapartheid and the vicissitudes of building a house on the Cape. In *The Promised Land*, British rave-generation journo Decca Aitkenhead comes to Cape Town in search of the perfect E (ecstasy tablet), but instead finds a city in the grip of vicious gang warfare.

Many travel writers have been drawn to Cape Town as a starting or finishing point on their tours of South Africa, or, as in the case of Peter Moore in *Swahili For the Broken-Hearted* and Paul Theroux in *Dark Star Safari*, an epic journey across the continent itself. The city tends to come off favourably but, along with Dervla Murphy in *South From The Limpopo* and Gavin Bell in *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, both Theroux and Moore are keen to beat a path to Khayelitsha to observe the grim challenges of township life close-up.

and often deliberate cultural seclusion has created a unique people who are often called 'the white tribe of Africa'. The ethnic composition of Afrikaners is difficult to quantify but it has been estimated at 40% Dutch, 40% German, 7.5% French, 7.5% British and 5% other. Some historians have argued that the '5% other' figure includes a significant proportion of blacks and coloureds.

Afrikaans, the only Germanic language to have evolved outside Europe, is central to the Afrikaner identity, but it has also served to reinforce their isolation from the outside world. The Afrikaners are a religious people and the group's brand of Christian fundamentalism based on 17th-century Calvinism is still a powerful influence. Urbanised middle-class Afrikaners tend to be considerably more moderate, and the further the distance between the horrors of the apartheid era and the 'new South Africa', the more room there is for Afrikaners to be proud of their heritage. You'll find Afrikaans to be a much stronger presence in the northern suburbs of Cape Town and in the country towns of the Cape, including the Winelands around Stellenbosch, which has a prominent Afrikaans university.

Most other white Capetonians are of British extraction. Cape Town, as the seat of British power for so long, is somewhat less Afrikaner in outlook than other parts of the country. White liberal Capetonians were regarded with suspicion by more-conservative whites during the apartheid years.

LIFESTYLE

Pinning down an 'average' Capetonian lifestyle is a tricky if not impossible business. Pious Muslims in the Bo-Kaap head to the mosque for morning prayers while, in the nearby Waterkant, hedonistic partygoers are on their way home. The life of a black live-in maid (average monthly salary R800 to R1000 including board and lodging), her children looked after by her mother or grandmother in the countryside, is radically different from that of the middle-class white family she works for (average monthly salary R15,000 with both husband and wife working).

This is not to say that the 'dream' lifestyle of the Capetonian doesn't exist, only that it's a lot rarer than might be imagined. A fortunate family will live in one of the more salubrious suburbs, say Vredehoek or Newlands, in a multimillion-rand home with a pool. They'll have a holiday home elsewhere in the Western Cape, perhaps up at Paternoster or down around Hermanus. There's a car or two to get the family around, and at least one maid/nanny to take care of the more-tedious bits of housework and childcare. There are school fees to

JEWISH CAPE TOWN

South Africa's oldest Jewish community is in Cape Town. Even though the rules of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC) allowed only for Protestant settlers at the Cape, there are records of Jews converting to Christianity in Cape Town as early as 1669. Jewish immigration picked up speed after the British took charge, with settlers coming mainly from England and Germany. The first congregation was established in 1841 and the first synagogue (now part of the South African Jewish Museum, p98) opened in 1863.

The real boom in Jewish immigration, though, was between 1880 and 1930 when an estimated 15,000 families arrived in South Africa, mainly from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Belarus. During this period Jews began to make a large contribution to the city's civic and cultural life. Max Michaelis donated his art collection to the city (see p96) and Hyman Liberman became the first Jewish mayor of Cape Town in 1903, the same year the Great Synagogue was consecrated. Liberman's estate helped fund the building of the SA National Gallery. Other Jewish mayors included Louis Gradner (1933–35) and his son Walter (1965–67).

By 1969 Cape Town had a community of 25,000 Jews, second in number only to the community in Jo'burg, supporting 12 orthodox congregations and 31 Hebrew schools. The tide turned during the apartheid era, however, and today the community stands at around 16,000. Sea Point is now the main Jewish area of Cape Town, although in the past the community had a heavy presence in District Six (see p60) and neighbouring Woodstock. If you have chance, pay a visit to Beinkinstadt (p161), a wonderful emporium of Judaica, on the brink of the old District Six; inside it's as if time has stood still since Moses Beinkinstadt, the current owner's grandfather, first opened the store in 1903.

DEALING WITH RACISM

Although the apartheid regime has been dismantled, cultural apartheid still exists in South Africa. To an extent, discrimination based on wealth is replacing that based on race; most visitors will automatically gain high status. There are though still plenty of people (mainly whites) who sincerely believe that a particular skin colour means a particular mind-set. A few believe it means inferiority.

If you aren't white, many white South Africans will register this. The constant awareness of race, even if it doesn't lead to problems, is an annoying feature of travel in South Africa, whatever your skin colour. Racial discrimination is illegal, but it's unlikely that the overworked and underresourced police force will be interested in most complaints. Tourism authorities are likely to be more sensitive. If you encounter racism in any of the places mentioned in this book, please let us know.

African

If you are of African descent, you may well encounter racism from some white and coloured people. Do not assume a special bond with black South Africans either. The various indigenous peoples of South Africa form distinct and sometimes antagonistic cultural groups. Thus travellers of African descent from France or the USA will not necessarily receive a warmer welcome than anyone else.

White

If you are of European descent, it will be assumed by most white South Africans that you are essentially the same as them. This may mean you'll find yourself having to listen to some obnoxious racist remarks.

Indian

Although Indians were discriminated against by whites during apartheid, blacks saw them as collaborating with the whites. If you are of Indian descent this could mean some low-level antagonism from both blacks and whites.

Asian

East Asians were a problem for apartheid – Japanese were granted 'honorary white' status, and people from other East Asian countries were probably indistinguishable from the Japanese to insular South Africans. Grossly inaccurate stereotyping and cultural ignorance will probably be the main annoyances you will face.

consider, and the cost of keeping a dog – typically a large one – which will act as an extra security device alongside the locked gates, window bars and rapid-response alarm systems that are dotted throughout the home. The fear that someone could take all this away is naggingly constant. Still, it's a good life, with restaurant meals, nights at cinemas and theatres, and frequent visits to the beach.

What this dream family might spend on groceries every month could keep the much more numerous 'average' black families in the Cape Flats going for many months, if not a year. These families might be lucky and live in a concrete-and-brick home, but chances are that they are in a self-built shack that cost about R2700 for all the materials. The furniture is likely to be second-hand; it is highly unlikely that they have a car (if they do it is also likely to be second-hand), just as it is rare to have a fully plumbed bathroom in the house. For water and ablutions there're toilets and a standpipe shared with several other families on the block. The mother will be working in a low-paid job out of which she'll have to find a large chunk of cash for transport and smaller amounts for childcare and the kids' fees at school. A holiday is likely to be a trip once a year on a deathtrap of a bus back to the Eastern Cape to visit relatives in the countryside.

A decent education can make a world of difference to a South African person's chances of prosperity, but even more than a decade after apartheid huge differences remain between schools in the white suburbs of Cape Town and those in the townships in terms of resources, the size of classes and examination pass rates. All parents have to find money to pay part if not all of their kids' school fees, even at the state-run schools, and historical differences mean that the best schools (which are also the most expensive schools to attend) are located in the white areas of the city. Scholarships do exist (see Responsible Luxury, p175), but they obviously can't provide for everyone and many kids, of all colours, miss out.

THE RITES OF INITIATION

Male initiation ceremonies, which can take place from around age 16 to the early 20s, are a consistent part of traditional black African life (and coloured Muslim life where teenage boys are also circumcised, albeit with much less ritual). Initiations typically take place around the end of the year and in June to coincide with school and public holidays.

In the Eastern Cape, young Xhosa men would go into a remote area in the mountains to attend the Vkwaluka, the initiation school where they would be circumcised, live in tents and learn what it is to be a man in tribal society. Some still do return to the Eastern Cape for the ceremony, but others cannot afford to or choose not to do so, thus similar initiation sites are created in makeshift tents erected amid the wastelands around the townships.

Initiations used to take several months, but these days they're likely to last a month or less. Initiates shave off all their hair, shed their clothes and wear just a blanket, and daub their faces in white clay before being circumcised. They receive a stick which symbolises the traditional hunting stick, and which they use instead of their hands for shaking hands during the initiation period. Immediately after the circumcision, for about a week while the wound heals, initiates eat very little and drink nothing. No women are allowed to go near the initiation ground.

Initiations are expensive – around R6000 to R8000, mainly for the cost of the animals (typically sheep or goats) that have to be slaughtered for the various feasts that are part of the ceremony. At the end of the initiation all the items used, including the initiate's old clothes, are burned together with the hut in which he stayed, and the boy emerges as a man. You can spot recent initiates in the townships and Cape Town's city centre by the smart clothes they are wearing, often a sports jacket and a cap.

Traditional

Few blacks in Cape Town maintain a fully traditional lifestyle on a daily basis, but elements of their culture do persist, lending a distinctively African air to the townships. In Site C of Khayelitsha, for example, over half the residents are Xhosa, hailing from the Eastern Cape. They keep very strong ties with the area and its customs.

Herbal medicine shops are regularly used and *sangomas* consulted for all kinds of illnesses. Certain *sangomas* can also help people get in touch with their ancestors, who play a crucial role in the lives of many black Capetonians. Ancestors are believed to watch over their kin and act as intermediaries between this world and that of the spirits. People turn to their ancestors if they have problems or requests. An animal may be slaughtered in their honour and roasted on an open fire as it's believed the ancestors eat the smoke.

Women are far more likely than men to wear some form of traditional clothing, with different subgroups wearing different costumes, colours and arrangements of beads. At important junctions in life, such as birth, coming of age and marriage, various old rites and customs are followed, too.

Gay & Lesbian

Cape Town's credentials as an upstanding gay- and lesbian-friendly destination are not in doubt – the city proudly flies the rainbow flag particularly in the Waterkant. The **Cape Town Pride festival** (www.capetownpride.co.za), held in February, has become a fixture on the city's events calendar, as are the **Out in Africa: SA International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival** (www.oia.co.za), held in February or March, and the Mother City Queer Project dance party (see the boxed text, p143).

It wasn't always this way. In the early days of the Cape Colony, homosexual men were drowned in the harbour. See the movie *Proteus* for the true story of two gay prisoners on Robben Island in the 18th century. The fate of the colony's lesbians isn't recorded (an early example, perhaps, of the lower profile of the lesbian community).

An open gay and lesbian community was also a far-from-prominent feature of the apartheid years, although a few brave souls, such as Pieter-Dirk Uys, used their left-of-centre position to criticise the government (see p146). When political freedom for the country's black majority began to become a reality in the early 1990s, it was taken for granted that gay rights would also be protected under the new constitution. Today South Africa has the only constitution in the world that guarantees freedom of sexual choice. In 2005 the highest court in the land also decreed that same-sex marriages should be allowed; the law permitting them will come into effect in December 2007.

Elements of gay culture have long permeated Cape Town. Take 'moffie', the local derogatory term for a homosexual – it is the Afrikaans word for glove and is also the word used for the leader of a performance troupe in the Cape Town New Year Karneval (p10). These leaders wear gloves and are often gay, hence moffie's alternative meaning. South African gays have now reclaimed moffie as a word to use among themselves, in much the same way that many gays have appropriated 'queer' in an effort to repudiate its negative connotations.

Gay Capetonians also developed a code language, called Gayle, in which women's names stand in for certain words. For example, a Cilla is a cigarette; Nadia means no; Wendy, white; Priscilla, police; Beaulah, beautiful; Hilda, ugly; and Griselda, gruesome. If you hear someone talking about Dora in a bar, you'll know they're after a drink (they could also be calling someone a drunk!). To learn more about this fascinating underground language read Ken Cage's *Gayle – The Language of Kinks and Queens*, which includes a dictionary of the most popular code words. For more information on gay and lesbian Cape Town, see p214.

FOOD & DRINK

The city's restaurants and cafés offer up a world of eating possibilities, from Turkish and Middle Eastern to Chinese, Japanese and Indian. Some of the Italian restaurants, in particular, are excellent, and there's also a mouthwatering range of delis, often with cafés attached. There are also plenty of fast-food options. Among the local chains are Steers for burgers, Spur for steaks and salad bars, and the internationally known Nandos, which purveys spicy Portuguese-style chicken.

If you're looking for something more unusual, try the home-grown traditional dishes of Cape Malay (see below) and Afrikaner cooking. There's also a strong movement towards modern South African cuisine in Cape Town, which uses local ingredients, such as seafood and some of the *fynbos* plants (the vegetation of the area around Cape Town, composed of proteas, heaths and reeds), in creative ways.

As you'd expect in a city by the water, seafood is plentiful. In many places you'll see 'line fish' advertised – this means the catch of the day. Meaty local fish such as kingklip and snoek are often served; search out the freshest specimens at the Waterfront, Kalk Bay (with its marvellous fish market) and Hout Bay.

Restaurants serving African dishes, not all of which originate in South Africa, are popular. Try a meal at the exceptional Africa Café (p126) or the lively Marco's African Place (p145), both in the City Bowl, or you could head to one of the handful of restaurants in the townships (p134). You'll find that the staple for most blacks here is rice or mealie pap (maize porridge), often served with a fatty stew. It isn't especially appetising, but it's cheap. The same

CAPE MALAY CUISINE

The unique Cape Malay dishes you'll encounter around the Cape are well worth trying. This intriguing mix of Malay and Dutch styles originated in the earliest days of European settlement and marries pungent spices with local produce. It can be stodgy and on the sweet side for some people's tastes.

The Cape Malay dish you'll come across most often is bobotie, a kind of shepherd's pie usually made with lightly curried beef or lamb mince topped with savoury egg custard, and usually served on a bed of turmeric-flavoured rice with a side dab of chutney. Some sophisticated versions of bobotie use other meats and even seafood.

There is a variety of bredies (pot stews of meat or fish, and vegetables); one unusual example is *waterblommetjie bredie*, a mutton dish with faintly peppery water hyacinth flowers and white wine. *Dhalsjies* (chilli bibles) are very moreish deep-fried balls of chickpea-flour batter mixed with potato, coriander and spinach. Mild curries are popular and are often served with *rootis*, similar to Indian roti bread. Also taking a cue from Indian cooking are samosas, triangular pockets of crisp fried pastry enclosing a spicy vegetable filling. Meat lovers should try sosaties, which is a Cape Malay-style kebab.

Traditional desserts include *malva* pudding, a delicious sponge traditionally made with apricot jam and vinegar, and the very similar brandy pudding (note that true Cape Malay cuisine – which is strongly associated with the Muslim community – contains no alcohol). You might also want to try koeksisters, a syrup-dipped doughnut.

Among the places to sample this type of food are Biesmiellah (p125) and the Noon Gun Tearoom & Restaurant (p125) in Bo-Kaap, De Volkskombuis (p191) in Stellenbosch, and Topsy & Company (p194) in Franschoek.

TOP FIVE CAPE COOKBOOKS

- Although he died in 1947, doctor, botanist and man of letters C Louis Leipoldt is still remembered for his early contribution to the understanding of Cape cuisine. The anthology *Leipoldt's Food & Wine* brings together a trio of his books: *Cape Cookery*, *Culinary Treasures* and *Three Hundred Years of Cape Wines*.
- *Cape Flavour – A Gastronomic Meander Through the Winelands*, by Myrna Robins, is a gorgeously photographed collection of the best restaurants, recipes and food sensations of the Cape Winelands, from Stellenbosch to Robertson.
- *The Africa Café Experience*, by Portia de Smidt, is a colourful and tempting book that documents the legend that is the Africa Café (p126). Recipes are gathered from all over the continent, including *ta'amiyya* bean and herb patties from Egypt and chilli chicken wings as done in Mozambique.
- Philippa Cheifitz' *Cape Town Food* is an award-winning cookery book that focuses on dishes made with local ingredients, such as Cape Town's vast variety of seafood. Learn how to use *waterblommetjies* (indigenous water hyacinths) in a traditional slow-cooked lamb stew.
- Ambitious chefs will want to try re-create dishes from La Colombe (p132) from the recipes in *Feast*, by Franck Dangereaux, a 2004 Gourmand World Cookbook winner.



goes for the *smilies* (sheep's heads) that you'll see boiled up and served on the streets. Other dishes include samp (a mixture of maize and beans), *imifino* (mealie meal and vegetables), and *chakalaka* (a tasty fry-up of onions, tomatoes, peppers, garlic, ginger, sweet chilli sauce and curry powder).

Traditional Afrikaner cuisine shows its Voortrekker heritage in foods such as biltong (the deliciously moreish dried meat) and rusks, perfect for those long journeys into the hinterland. Boerewors (spicy sausage) is the traditional sausage, and must be 90% meat, of which 30% can be fat. Plenty of recipes make use of game; some include venison, which will be some type of buck.

It's OK to drink the tap water. Locally produced fruit juices are excellent. Note that fizzy drink are called cool drinks. Try some of the excellent Cape wines while you're in town; see the Wine chapter (p40) for recommendations.

Draught beers are served in large (500ml) or small (250ml) glasses. Usually you will be sold lager-style beer in cans or *dumpies* (small bottles) for around R8. Black Label and Castle are popular brands, but Amstel and Carlsberg are also good. Look out for Mitchell's and Birkenhead's beers, which come from a couple of small breweries. Windhoek beer, brewed in Namibia, is made with strictly natural ingredients. The alcohol content of beer is around 5%, stronger than UK or US beer. Even Castle Lite has 4% alcohol.

FASHION

Fashion in all its forms – from what you wear to how you decorate your home – is a big deal in Cape Town. The main forum is the annual Design Indaba (p9), which brings together all kinds of creative people. At the 2006 event you could have taken in exhibits by the likes of jewellery designers such as Philippa Green and Ida-Elsje (p165), *Rocketfuel furniture*

(www.rocketfuel.co.za), Elle Decoration Designer of the Year 2004/05 *Haldane Martin* (www.haldanemartin.co.za), whose Zulu Mama range of furnishings incorporates indigenous basket-weaving techniques, and 2005/06 Elle Decoration winner Heath Nash (p168).

Many of South Africa's top clothing designers are based in Jo'burg, but they all head to the Mother City to show off their work in Cape Town's fashion week (p11). Labels to watch out for include Maya Prass, known for her use of boldly feminine colours, textures and patterns in her clothes; Amanda Laird Cherry, whose male and female designs can be found in the Big Blue boutiques (p163); and Stoned Cherrie and Sun Goddess (p166), the latter picking up on traditional African designs and giving them a modern twist. Craig Native's T-shirts, printed with new South African slogans and images, have been a big hit – find them at many of the city's boutiques.

Running for some 25 years longer than the trendy Fashion Week is Cape Town's Spring Queen and Fashion Parade, an initiative of the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU). The pageant is usually held in November and features the designs of scores of women who work in clothing, textile and leather factories across the Western Cape.

For up-and-coming designers head to fashion nexus Young Designers Emporium (p169) or the boutiques along Long St. Greenmarket Sq is a good place to hunt around for more African styles of clothing, such as the colourful, highly patterned 'Madiba' shirts popularised by Nelson Mandela. Here you'll also find the cheeky T-shirts of Justin Nurse's Laugh It Off, which satirise the logos and catch phrases of global brands and multinationals.

SPORT

Capetonians are just as mad about sport as other South Africans. In terms of drawing the crowds, the biggest game is soccer, and its popularity is set to increase in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup (www.southafrica2101.org). The city's Green Point Stadium (Map pp252–3) will be rebuilt for the contest as a multipurpose sports facility with a retractable dome to cope with Cape Town's varied weather. South Africa is also clinging to the hope that their national squad, known as 'Bafana Bafana' (literally 'Boys Boys', meaning the 'Boys'), can also be rebuilt – their performance has been something of a joke in recent years, flunking out of the Africa Cup in the first round in 2006.

Cape Town has two teams in South Africa's national Premier Soccer League (www.psl.co.za): Santos, the national champions in 2001/2002, and Ajax Cape Town (www.ajaxct.com). If either of these teams compete against South Africa's top soccer teams, the Kaizer Chiefs and the Orlando Pirates, you'll have to fight for tickets. Games are played from August to May.

Rugby (union, not league) is also very popular and traditionally the Afrikaners' sport. Cross-race support for the game has waned somewhat in the face of efforts to introduce greater balance in the ethnic composition of teams, and things haven't been helped by scandals involving allegations of racial intolerance between team members. The most popular games to watch are during the Super 14 tournament, in which teams from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand compete from late February until the end of May. If you're in town when one of these is on it's worth getting a ticket. Games are held at the Newlands Rugby Stadium (p158). For more details, check out the website www.sarugby.net.

Capetonians have a soft spot for cricket – hardly surprising given the attractiveness of Newlands Cricket Ground (p158) where all top national and international games are played. This is where the city hosted the 2003 Cricket World Cup. The game was the first

JACQUES KALLIS

Cape Town-born Jacques Kallis is the current star of South African cricket. The 31-year-old batsman's start in international cricket, though, was not auspicious: at his test debut in December 1995 against England he managed only one run. Two years later he made his mark bringing the Proteas victory over Australia.

South Africa's all-time leading test run scorer, with a score of 7337, was named International Cricket Council (ICC) Player of the Year in 2005. He's not the flashiest of cricketers but is considered one of the world's best all-rounders for his solid performance both at the crease and on the field. Celebrating his first decade in the professional game he launched the Jacques Kallis Scholarship Foundation (www.jacqueskallis.co.za), which aims to sponsor and invest in the cricketing talent of tomorrow.

of the 'whites only' sports to wholeheartedly adopt a nonracial attitude, and development programmes in the townships are now beginning to pay dividends. The sport took a knocking in South Africa though in 2000 when Hansie Cronje, the youngest captain in the nation's cricketing history and still something of a legend, admitted taking bribes to rig matches. Although many believed he was taking the rap for others, he was banned for life. He died in a plane crash in 2003.

Cape Town's second test ground opened in the township of Langa in 2000. Local cricketers to watch out for include Jacques Kallis (see p19) and Mkya Ntini. Contact **Western Province Cricket Association** (☎ 021-657 2003; www.wpca.org.za) for more information.

The first horse races in Cape Town were held at Green Point in 1795. The sport took hold from then and today Cape Town has two courses, Kenilworth (see p158), which has two tracks, and **Durbanville** (☎ 021-975 2524), northeast of the city. Kenilworth is the location of South Africa's fanciest race meeting, the J&B Met (p9).

MEDIA

Cape Town's two main daily newspapers – the morning *Cape Times* and the afternoon *Cape Argus* (www.capeargus.co.za) – are both tabloids masquerading as broadsheets and they print practically the same news. Hardly surprising since both are in the stable of one of South Africa's largest media organisations, **Independent News and Media** (www.iol.co.za). The headlines of both papers will give you a good idea of what concerns Capetonians – often some lurid tale of crime or government mismanagement or corruption.

Making no pretences at all about the kind of news it pedals is the tabloid *Daily Voice*, available in both English and Afrikaans. Dubbed the Daily Vice by one fulminating preacher, it's been a huge hit with people on the Cape Flats who would never have bought a newspaper in the past. Among its more infamous headlines have been 'Jesus Lives in My Toilet' about thousands of people converging on a tiny flat to view the apparently miraculous Easter vision of an 'angel'; and 'Moffie Hooker Shot in the Gat', referring to the case of a thieving transvestite hooker shot in the backside by a disgruntled client.

Although not nearly so bland as during apartheid when blasphemy was assiduously edited out of imported programmes, South African TV is still nothing to get excited about. The local commercial channel, e-tv, may set pulses racing with its soft-porn movies late on Saturday night, but you could still channel-surf yourself into a coma in a matter of minutes most other days – the breakfast advertorial and shopping shows are particularly awful. The national broadcaster SABC offers up three channels with precious little to choose between them other than their language content.

LANGUAGE

In the Cape Town area three of South Africa's 11 official languages (all equal under the law) are prominent: Afrikaans (spoken by many whites and coloureds), English (spoken by nearly everyone) and Xhosa (isiXhosa; spoken mainly by blacks).

As early as 1685 there were reports of a corrupted version of Dutch being spoken in the Cape in the area where Paarl is today. It was in Paarl, 200 years later, that this new language, taking bits and pieces from German, French, Portuguese, Malay and indigenous African languages, was first codified with consistent spellings and uniform grammar (see the boxed text, p197). In 1905, as the Second Language Movement got into its stride, Afrikaans was stripped of its coloured roots when Dutch words were substituted for those with an African or Asian origin. In the Cape though, where Afrikaans is the predominant language of the coloured community, a version called Cape Taal has persisted and developed along its own unique lines.

The languages of the Cape's indigenous peoples, the San and Khoikhoi, have all but disappeared, like the races that once spoke them. The rock-art gallery of the South African Museum (p99) has some fascinating exhibition materials on these languages. Meanwhile, as ever more Xhosa speakers move to Cape Town, the language is increasingly noticeable and more people (ie whites and coloureds) are learning how to get their tongues around the various clicks that are part of Xhosa pronunciation. For more information on languages, see p222.

ECONOMY & COSTS

Western Cape accounts for about 15% of the country's total GDP, and many of South Africa's petroleum, insurance and retail corporations have their base in Cape Town. Viticulture, clothing, textiles, agriculture and fishing are all important sectors of the local economy, as is tourism. The opening of the Cape Town International Convention Centre has given a significant boost to this sector of the economy, and several high-profile hotel developments are under way, including an ultraluxury hotel complex at the Waterfront by entrepreneur Sol Kerzner of Sun City fame.

Cape Town's economy has been on a roll over the last few years, and is rapidly catching up with similar cities abroad. This in turn means that the city's not quite the bargain that it used to be. There have been accusations that Capetonian businesses have been overcharging, particularly at the high end of tourism where some hotel prices have shot up in excess of international levels. In some respects, Cape Town's prices are just catching up with those of equivalent cities in the world – what still makes the city decent value is the high quality of products and services you get for your cash.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) has become the watchword of Cape Town's economy, with many white-owned businesses scrambling to find either black or coloured partners or investors in the wake of the enactment of the BEE Bill in January 2005. Economic charters and codes of good practice to redress the imbalances in South Africa's economy have been drawn up and all businesses now should be implementing BEE strategies. At the same time, the government is also pushing a 'buy South African' policy with the **Proudly SA campaign** (www.proudlysa.co.za) – look out for the colourful logo in the national-flag colours on local products.

Most visitors will find eating and drinking very good value in Cape Town compared to elsewhere in the world; in contrast telephone charges, particularly for mobile phones, are pricey. If you're on a backpacker budget, you'll be looking at spending a minimum of R200 a day, while four-star travellers should reckon on R1000 to R1500 per day.

HOW MUCH?

Copy of the *Cape Argus* R3.70

Cocktail R20-25

Beer at a backpackers R8

Movie ticket R35

1hr parking in the city centre R6

1hr at an Internet café R10

Ticket to Robben Island R150

1L of unleaded petrol R5.25

Monkeybiz doll R150-500

Entry to nightclub R50

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

In a country so riven by economic inequality, you may want to make an effort to spend your rands where they'll help most. Here are some ideas:

- Take a township tour (p81) run by township people, not a big company.
- Stay at one of the township B&Bs (p183).
- Buy your souvenirs from the people who make them, not a dealer. For details of shops such as Monkeybiz, Streetwires and Wola Nani – all of which produce goods that help people in the townships – see p160.
- Shop for fruit at roadside stalls rather than at supermarkets.
- Contribute to or volunteer for local charities; see p22 for some suggestions.
- Pay the guys who look after cars around town; in general, they're helping to make the streets safer for everyone.
- Tip waiting and hotel staff and petrol-pump attendants – they rely on this income to supplement their low wages.

South Africa's national parks and reserves are well managed but, in general, environmental laws are weak, and some activities permitted here wouldn't be allowed in other countries. Shark-diving, sand-surfing and 'adventure' 4WD tours, for example, can have a negative effect on the environment, so try to get a feel for operators' commitment to treading lightly on the earth before you make arrangements.

CHARITY BEGINS IN CAPE TOWN

It's hard not to be shocked by the vast disparities in wealth and opportunity encountered in Cape Town. So how can you best help? A good starting point for information is the **Greater Good SA** (www.gretergood.co.za) website, which has details on many local charities and development projects. Also recommended are the website and book **How 2 Help** (www.h2h.info).

The **Tourism Community Development Trust** (www.tcdtrust.org.za) was started in 1999 by several key people in the local backpacker travel industry who wanted to help build a crèche in the Cape Flats townships. Through the hard work of board members from Ashanti Lodge, Day Trippers and Grassroute Tours, this has been achieved. The trust has since grown and become a major organisation taking on other education projects. At either the Backpack (p176) or Ashanti Lodge (p176) you can leave your old clothes so they can be sold to raise money for the trust.

There are several projects that work with Cape Town's street children. **Ons Plek** (☎ 021-465 4829; www.onsplek.org.za/17.0.html) provides a shelter for girls living on the streets, while **One Love** (☎ 021-461 6424; 85 Plein St, City Bowl) feeds homeless children between noon and 1pm Monday to Friday; you can buy food vouchers for between R20 and R100 either here or at several backpacker lodges.

Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org.za), which helps build homes in poor communities around the world, has several projects going in Cape Town which you can volunteer for.

The **Chris Hani Community School** (☎ 021-694 9112) in Langa accepts donations of school materials of any kind, while the **Christine Revell Children's Home** (☎ 021-697 1748; crevell@iafrica.com) in Athlone wants volunteers and donations of babies' and children's clothes and toys.

At some Cape Town hotels you'll find details of how you can contribute to the **Hotels Housing Trust** (☎ 021-659 7160; www.hotelshousingtrust.com). Donations to this body are passed on to the Homeless Peoples Federation, which helps those living in shacks with loans to build proper homes.

Also see p175 for details of the **Kay Mason Foundation** (www.kaymasonfoundation.org), which helps talented disadvantaged kids get a better education; p37 for details of the Dance For All and Jikeleza programmes, which encourage children and young adults to lead better lives through dance; and p215 for details of Nazareth House, which takes care of AIDS orphans.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Cape Town is one of the three capitals of South Africa. Pretoria is the administrative capital, Bloemfontein is the judicial capital and Cape Town is the seat of the nation's parliament. There are two houses of parliament: the National Assembly with 400 members and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) with 100 members.

The head of state is the president, currently Thabo Mbeki, leader of the ANC party. The president is elected by the National Assembly (and thus is always the leader of the majority party) rather than directly by the people. A South African president has more in common with a Westminster-style prime minister than with a US president, although as head of state they do have some executive powers denied most other prime ministers.

Cape Town is also the capital of Western Cape province, which has its own legislature and premier – currently Ebrahim Rasool of the ANC. The ANC also led the Cape Town metropolitan council until March 2006 when they narrowly lost out to the Democratic Alliance (DA). The mayor is the DA's Helen Zille.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE

If you've spent time in the Mediterranean then you've experienced Cape Town's climate. The summers are generally warm and dry, while winters tend to be wet and cool, the rains brought on by fierce northwesterly gales. Neither season experiences extremes of temperature, thanks to prevailing winds.

NEW CONSTITUTION

South Africa's constitution is one of the most enlightened in the world – not surprising when you consider the people's long struggle for freedom. Apart from forbidding discrimination on practically any grounds, among other things, it guarantees freedom of speech and religion, and access to adequate housing, adequate health care and basic adult education.

Be prepared though for 'four seasons in one day'. The peninsula's shape creates micro-climates, so you can be basking in the sun on one side of the mountain and sheltering from chilly rain and winds on the other. It's no accident that Newlands is so lush in comparison to Cape Point – the former receives four times as much rain annually as the latter.

For more on climate see p213.

THE LAND

Cape Town is at the northern end of a peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean on the southwest tip of Southern Africa. The peninsula has a steep, high spine of mountains, beginning at Devil's Peak in Cape Town and running all the way down to Cape Point. Table Mountain, the most prominent feature of these mountains, is more than 1000m high, starting close to sea level. The escarpment running down the Atlantic (west) coast south of Table Mountain forms a striking series of buttresses known as the Twelve Apostles (see p67).

The suburbs and towns on the Atlantic coast, and those on False Bay, west of Muizenberg, cling to a very narrow coastal strip. East of these mountains the land slopes more gently down to the Cape Flats, a sandy plain. Looking east across the Cape Flats you can see more mountain ranges rising up around Stellenbosch and, to the southeast, the Hottentots Holland area. There is no major river in the city area, although there is a system of estuarine lakes northeast of Muizenberg, near the Cape Flats.

Some 600 million years ago, all of what today is Cape Town lay beneath the sea. Volcanic activity pushed the land briefly out of the ocean, but it wasn't until roughly 400 million years later that another series of cataclysmic earth movements forced the land back up again for good. Table Mountain began to be thrown up 250 million years ago, and the plateau around Cape Town gradually eroded to leave behind Table Mountain.

For more on the geology of the Cape see p67.

GREEN CAPE TOWN

So special is the environment of the Cape Peninsula that the whole area has been awarded UN World Heritage status. Yet four centuries on from European settlement it is also an environment that has been radically and often detrimentally changed, with the indigenous flora and fauna now surviving mainly in reserves and on agriculturally unviable land.

Among the environmental challenges facing the Cape Peninsula is dealing with the pollution from a greatly increased population, as well as supplying them with power and water. Typically, Capetonians are applying their energy and creativity to the problems and coming up with solutions ranging from energy-efficient housing to recycling of waste materials into attractive decorative crafts (see p34). To learn more about some of these initiatives you could take one of the specialised tours offered by **Cape Capers Tours** (p82) or **African Soul Tours** (p91).

Pocket Nukes

As the ongoing power cuts of 2006 have painfully demonstrated to Capetonians, something needs to be done about the provision of electricity for the city. However, the solution favoured by the government – the development of the experimental Pebble Bed Modular Reactor (PBMR) at the

WHEN THE DOCTOR COMES CALLING

One of the Cape's most characteristic weather phenomena is the South-Easter, a southeasterly wind that howls across the Cape, usually between late November and the end of January, although it can go on for longer. The wind is affectionately known as the Cape doctor as it blasts away the smog of modern life and keeps the air fresh and temperatures cooler than they would be otherwise.

As it crosses False Bay the wind picks up moisture, which it drops over Table Mountain, helping keep the environment lush and green. The doctor also creates Table Mountain's famous 'tablecloth', the layer of cloud that tumbles off the north face of the mountain so spectacularly.

The doctor is not entirely benign, though. It can reach speeds of 130km/h and its persistence and strength can fan forest fires, put the cableway out of action, whip up the ocean and generally drive you mad as it rattles and swirls around the City Bowl, often for days on end.



Jan van Riebeeck's original vegetable garden, Company's Gardens (p93)

current site of the Koeberg nuclear power station – is years behind in its development, due to lack of necessary international financial support and great public antipathy.

South Africa's main energy company, Eskom, is driving the project to build these new small reactors (sometimes referred to as 'pocket nukes'), based on Germany's Thorium High-Temperature Reactor (THTR) from the 1980s. Eskom claims they are the first 'inherently safe' reactors because the fuel cells can withstand the highest foreseeable temperatures and the nuclear core is designed to shut itself down within minutes should a fault that could lead to overheating occur. However, international experts disagree, citing numerous safety concerns.

So far, over R1.5 billion has been invested in developing the technology with at least another R10 billion needed for building the demo at Koeberg and a fuel plant at Pelindaba near Pretoria. It's hoped that the high development costs will be offset by the income generated from the projected international sales of 216 reactors, at an estimated US\$225 million per reactor, with a further 24 units earmarked for South Africa. And yet private investors have shunned the project and the national government has had to provide R500 million to keep it going.

Alien Vegetation & Water Shortages

The Cape's dense evergreen forests that were once home to large mammals have long since vanished. Forests of nonindigenous trees, such as oak, pine and eucalyptus, have been planted in their place. In the Cape's kind climate these aliens have thrived, but have also wreaked havoc on the environment. For example, the wind-sculpted pines that coat the lower slopes of Table Mountain are draining the Cape of its precious water supplies; the whole peninsula regularly suffers water shortages. Their presence contributes to the

devastating forest fires that regularly sweep across the mountain and have threatened the Cape's unique *fynbos* .

Alien-clearance programmes have been in place since 1997 and are beginning to show very positive results (p69). Also, heavy rainfall and the success of water-conservation programmes helped alleviate the Cape's drought status in 2005 and 2006, and enabled the city authorities to revise their water-restriction policies.

THE CAPE'S TOP FIVE GREEN SPACES

- Company's Gardens (p93)
- Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens (p105)
- Rondevlei Nature Reserve (p108)
- Table Mountain National Park (p66)
- West Coast National Park (p203)

Township Fires & Kuyasa Project

In the townships and informal settlements on the Cape Flats, developing-world economic imperatives result in poor environmental standards. The most obvious sign is the smoke that sometimes drifts around the mountain and over the city, building up into quite heavy pollution after a few windless days. Most of the smoke is from fires used for cooking and heating (people trudging back to the townships carrying loads of wood is a common sight on the roads east of the city), but some is from burning tyres; a few scraps of metal can be gleaned from a tyre and then sold.

Balanced against this is very good environmental news from the townships. In the Kuyasa area of Khayelitsha, a small energy-efficiency housing project has become the first to be registered as a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol and the very first in the world to be awarded Gold Status by meeting 20 sustainable development criteria. The pilot project involved retrofitting 10 low-income houses with solar water heating, thermal insulation and other energy-saving devices. This reduced energy consumption in each home by an average of 40% over 14 months, amounting to a significant financial saving for residents, while improving their standard of living by providing hot water and thermal heating. There are plans now to retrofit a further 2300 houses, creating employment and generating a carbon saving estimated at 137,000 tons over 21 years.

Marine Matters

Overfishing of endangered fish and seafood is a big problem in Cape Town. Illegal fishing of crayfish is particularly rife. For details on how you can assist by avoiding any overfished or illegal species when visiting Cape Town's many seafood restaurants, see p133.

Pollution is also a threat to the marine environment, as demonstrated by an oil spill in Table Bay in June 2000, the worst ever suffered along the notoriously treacherous Cape coast. Over 40% of the African penguin population on Robben and Dassen Islands was threatened, causing conservation bodies such as the **Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds** (Sancocb; ☎ 021-557 6155; www.sancocb.co.za), the local authorities and even the army to mount the world's biggest rescue operation of its kind to save 21,000 oiled birds.

There is also grave concern about the planned 24-hectare expansion of Cape Town's docks onto reclaimed land. Six million cubic metres of sand will be dredged from the sea bed adjoining Robben Island to construct the extension, causing a massive impact on the marine environment and rapid coastal erosion from the Foreshore north to Melkbosstrand.

LYNEDOCH ECOVILLAGE

A small environmental revolution is in process at the Lynedoch EcoVillage (Map p46), some 15km south of Stellenbosch. It's currently a somewhat scattered collection of small holdings, large wine estates, clusters of farm worker housing and a crossroads with a petrol station, shop and post office, but the aim is to eventually create South Africa's first ecologically designed, intentionally socially mixed community.

To this end a R4-million programme was completed in June 2004, providing an ecologically designed infrastructure (water, roads, sanitation, electricity and telecommunications) for 34 housing sites in the EcoVillage's first development phase. Fifteen of these houses, ranging from semidetached to terraces, were subsidised and earmarked for farm workers, while the remaining 19 were purchased by private buyers. It's compulsory for every property owner to join the home-owners association, entitling them to have a say on all community issues as well as future planning and growth.

The village uses a range of water-saving and alternative-energy strategies. Houses will have water-saving taps and showerheads, and the waste water will be recycled organically and reused for toilet flushing and irrigation. The sanitised waste left over will be used as a high-grade fertiliser. Each house will also be thermally insulated and fitted with solar panels and solar water heaters, supplemented by electricity from the grid. This mixed system is estimated to reduce each household's electricity consumption by 60%.

What used to be a huge corrugated-iron shed built for student raves has been renovated to accommodate the Lynedoch Primary School (up to Grade 9) for 475 children from farm worker families, a large all-purpose hall, and the offices and classrooms of the **Sustainability Institute** (www.sustainabilityinstitute.net) who are guiding the EcoVillage project.

URBAN PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Cape Town is still shackled with the legacy of apartheid's notion of 'urban planning' – designated areas for blacks, whites and coloureds. These, of course, no longer exist, but the infrastructure – or lack of it – that goes with them cannot be changed overnight, as the millions who live in the destitute Cape Flats know only too well. A major share of the city council's resources goes into improving the lot of townships with new homes and community facilities, such as the N2 Gateway and Khayelitsha Business District projects.

The council is also aware, however, that it cannot neglect the money-generating city centre and Atlantic coast area. To this end the **Cape Town Partnership** (www.capetowncid.co.za), an initiative between business and local government, was formed in 1999. It has since had huge success in improving security and cleanliness in the City Bowl, Gardens and Green Point areas through its programme of City Improvement Districts (CIDs). The body is now focusing on the bigger picture, aiming to make the City Bowl more pedestrian-friendly, to get more people living in the city centre (hence all those loft-apartment developments in old city buildings and warehouses), and to introduce social programmes that deal with the problem of street kids and provide affordable housing for low-income groups.

Already, Church Sq has been cleared of parking spaces and reconstructed as a public space; similar proposals are being considered for the Grand Pde. There's a plan to pedestrianise all of Parliament St from the end of Roeland St down to Darling St, and traffic lanes along part of Wale St will be reduced from four to two to create Cathedral Sq in front of St George's Cathedral.

Next up will be an upgrading of the city's main railway station, which dates from the early 1960s. Every day, some 120,000 people pass through the station, which still bears the marks of the apartheid past in the separate entrances for blacks and whites and confusing layers of public-transport interconnections. The plan is to rationalise and upgrade the space and facilities including new retail units and possibly even a hotel. An improved railway station will lend impetus to the shifting of the city's business district down towards the Foreshore, where the port facilities are also being expanded.

A spur to all this development is the coming of the 2010 World Cup; soccer games will be played at a rebuilt Green Point Stadium, and the city is already working on upgrading the airport and public transport routes.

For more about modern Capetonian architecture, see p30.

The Authors

Simon Richmond



Simon first visited Cape Town in 2001 to research both Lonely Planet's *South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland* and *Cape Town* guides. He has since returned twice more to work on new editions of each book. He's explored

practically every corner of the city from Cape Point to Durbanville, and Clifton to Khayelitsha, staying in all kinds of accommodation from shack to penthouse. There are very few restaurants, cafés and bars that have escaped his attention and if there's an activity going, you can bet he's done it, from sand-boarding to paragliding off Lion's Head. His £250 excess-baggage bill at the end of this trip suggests he took the shopping research very seriously.

Simon's Top Cape Town Day

'Remind me again why I'm getting up at 5.30am to climb Lion's Head?' I ask Lucy. 'Because sunrise is when you climb the mountain, and sunset is when you hit the beach', she replies. There's little faulting this logic, especially when I know I can look forward to a delicious breakfast at Manna Epicure (p128) on Kloof St after the dawn hike. With the day just starting, I give the car a work-out on the bendy coastal roads heading over to Hout Bay, taking the long, scenic way to Kalk Bay via spectacular Chapman's Peak Dr. Trust me, there's always something interesting to buy in Kalk Bay's many craft and antique shops, as well as more excellent food at the Olympia Café (p133) or Live Bait (p133) right beside the picturesque harbour.

I head back to the city via Constantia, picking up a bottle of Vin de Constance at Klein Constantia (p45), or maybe going for a stroll through the shady grounds of Groot Constantia (p44). Returning to the City Bowl, I've got time to take in the latest

exhibition at the SA National Gallery (p98) before grabbing my beach towel and meeting up with Lucy again for that sunbathing session on Clifton No 3 (p102). The natural place for sundowners is La Med (p140), although Lucy, love her, does favour La Vie (p140). A quick shower and change and it's back into town for a fun-filled dinner at Madame Zingara (p126; what's with that drag belly dancer?), followed by nightcaps and dancing to the disco-fied *Love Boat* theme (lord help us!) at Cruz (p138).

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

Al Simmonds

Al Simmonds grew up in Johannesburg and lived in Cape Town before leaving South Africa in 1998 to live in London. There he worked as a travel journalist and, determined to know more about whence he had come, made sure at least one assignment a year covered South Africa.

When the pull of the freelance life became overwhelming, he left the Big Smoke to live in New York and Amsterdam, then hit Europe, the Far East (including the 1998 and 2002 World Cups) and Central America, before returning to his first love, Cape Town, where he now resides. He's been everywhere in South Africa except the northern reaches of the Northern Cape. Next time...

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ariadne van Zandbergen

Belgian-born photographer Ariadne van Zandbergen has been Johannesburg based since overlanding from Europe in 1994. She has trained her lens, often in rudimentary conditions, on remote landscapes and peoples in 25 African countries. Cape Town, with its sophisticated blend of cultures, made for a refreshingly urbane change, although encounters with cantankerous baboons, inquisitive penguins and loony motorists kept her on her toes.

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