An accidental tourist

In 1616, Jan van Rijnsbergen, a Dutch ship’s captain on a mission to discover a sea route to the East, was shipwrecked near the southern coast of Africa. The locals at the time, the Khoi-na inhabitants, were initially friendly, with trinkets and gifts given. However, when the captain accidentally shot an item into the air and picked it up himself, the locals fled in terror. This event marked the beginning of the Dutch presence in the area. Van Rijnsbergen and his crew were later rescued by the Portuguese, who took them to Mossel Bay.

Earthquakes and aftershocks

From the beginning of the 1600s, the Garden Route has been affected by seismic activity. An earthquake in 1816 caused significant damage to the town of Gouritz. In 1890, another earthquake caused damage to the town of Gouritsmond. These events have highlighted the need for earthquake preparedness and resilience in the region.

A route to explore

This guide takes the form of a road trip following the N2 as the main route from west to east in the Garden Route. It covers travel on an undulating road. This area, consisting of a coastal plateau 200 m above the sea, was once under water. The coastal plateau, which is now elevated, was formed from a wave-cut platform, under water when coastal erosion is at its maximum.

Near the town of Wildwood, the road enters the Outeniqua Mountains. This area is rich in geological history, with formations of the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods. The formations are visible in the masonry work on the old buildings in Mossel Bay. Below the town of Wilderness, the road enters the Wilderness National Park. Ideal for nature enthusiasts, families, and honeymooners, close to the George airport and centrally located.

The road passes through the Outeniqua Mountains, where the indigenous Fynbos vegetation is well preserved. The mountain ranges provide a variety of habitats for wildlife, including birds such as the Knysna lighthouse and the Cape parrot. The road also passes through the Hoekraal Point, a birding hotspot.

Near the town of Gouritz, the road enters the Gouritz River Valley. The valley is a popular destination for fishing and birding. The river is famous for its population of estuary otters, which are an indicator of healthy ecosystems.

Near the town of Storms River, the road enters the Storms River Mouth. The mouth is a popular destination for kayaking and birding. The river is a significant natural feature, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife.

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Africa's Great Fish Trap Trail

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**Silwer Nature Reserve**

This one site is a must to see in all George's attractions, and will captivate the imagination of every passer by. “In the middle of the dense forest, in the heart of the Wild Coast” lies the unique and beautiful Silwer Nature Reserve. Established in 1987, the reserve is a small, protected area of the De Mond Nature Reserve. It is situated between the Garden Route and the Tsitsikamma National Park, and is owned by the Nature Conservation. The reserve is home to a variety of wildlife, including the rare Knysna Lush Forest, which is only found in this area. It also provides a habitat for many other species, such as the Cape Vulture, Grootbas and Arabella Baboon. There are many trails in the reserve that allow visitors to explore and enjoy the natural beauty of the area.

**Wilderness to Knysna**

Knysna is probably one of the most visited and loved destinations in South Africa. This coastal town is a popular tourist destination and is known for its beautiful beaches, crystal-clear bays, and lush forests. The town is situated on the Garden Route, which is a popular route for tourists and offers stunning views of the surrounding landscape. Knysna is home to many historic buildings, including the Knysna Heads Lighthouse, which is one of the most iconic landmarks in the area. It is also famous for its wooden balconies, which are unique to the town. The town is a great place to visit for those who love nature and outdoor activities, as it offers many opportunities for hiking, cycling, and bird watching. The area is also home to a variety of interesting wildlife, including the Knysna Lush Forest and the Cape Vulture.

**The CapeNature Building National Reserve**

We continued our journey along the Garden Route towards Knysna, where we were greeted by the Knysna Lush Forest, a beautiful stretch of greenery that is home to a variety of wildlife. We decided to take a walk in the forest and see what we could find. As we walked along the path, we could see the different plants and animals that were thriving in the area. It was a peaceful and relaxing experience, and we were able to spot a variety of birds and other wildlife. We continued our journey towards Knysna, where we arrived at the Knysna Heads Lighthouse, which is one of the most iconic landmarks in the area. It is a beautiful building that was built in 1827, and it is a popular spot for tourists and locals alike. We took a picture of the lighthouse and continued our journey towards Knysna. As we arrived in Knysna, we were greeted by the sound of the ocean and the smell of saltwater. We were excited to explore the area and see what it had to offer.

**The Knysna Heads Lighthouse**

Knysna is a coastal town situated on the Garden Route, and it is known for its beautiful beaches and crystal-clear bays. The town is a popular tourist destination and is home to many historic buildings, including the Knysna Heads Lighthouse, which is one of the most iconic landmarks in the area. It is a beautiful building that was built in 1827, and it is a popular spot for tourists and locals alike. As we arrived at the lighthouse, we were greeted by the sound of the ocean and the smell of saltwater. We were excited to explore the area and see what it had to offer.

**Black Rocks**

This is a beach that we had to visit during our Knysna adventure. The beach is located on the shoreline of the Knysna Lush Forest and is a beautiful place to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the area. As we arrived at the beach, we were greeted by the sound of the waves and the smell of saltwater. We were excited to explore the area and see what it had to offer.

**The Heads**

The Heads is a beautiful area that we had to visit during our Knysna adventure. It is located on the shoreline of the Knysna Lush Forest and is a beautiful place to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the area. As we arrived at the Heads, we were greeted by the sound of the waves and the smell of saltwater. We were excited to explore the area and see what it had to offer.

**Keurbooms River Cave**

This is a cave that we had to visit during our Knysna adventure. The cave is located in the Keurbooms River Valley and is a beautiful place to explore and see the stunning formations. As we arrived at the cave, we were greeted by the sound of the water and the smell of saltwater. We were excited to explore the area and see what it had to offer.

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