

50 Places of the Overberg

Visit the southernmost tip of Africa: discover other interesting places and the history of the area



Bontebok National Park

Welcome to one of the smallest and unique Sanparks in the country, created to save the Bontebok from extinction.

Stay over
Stay over at the Lang Elsie's Kraal restcamp or bring your tent or caravan.

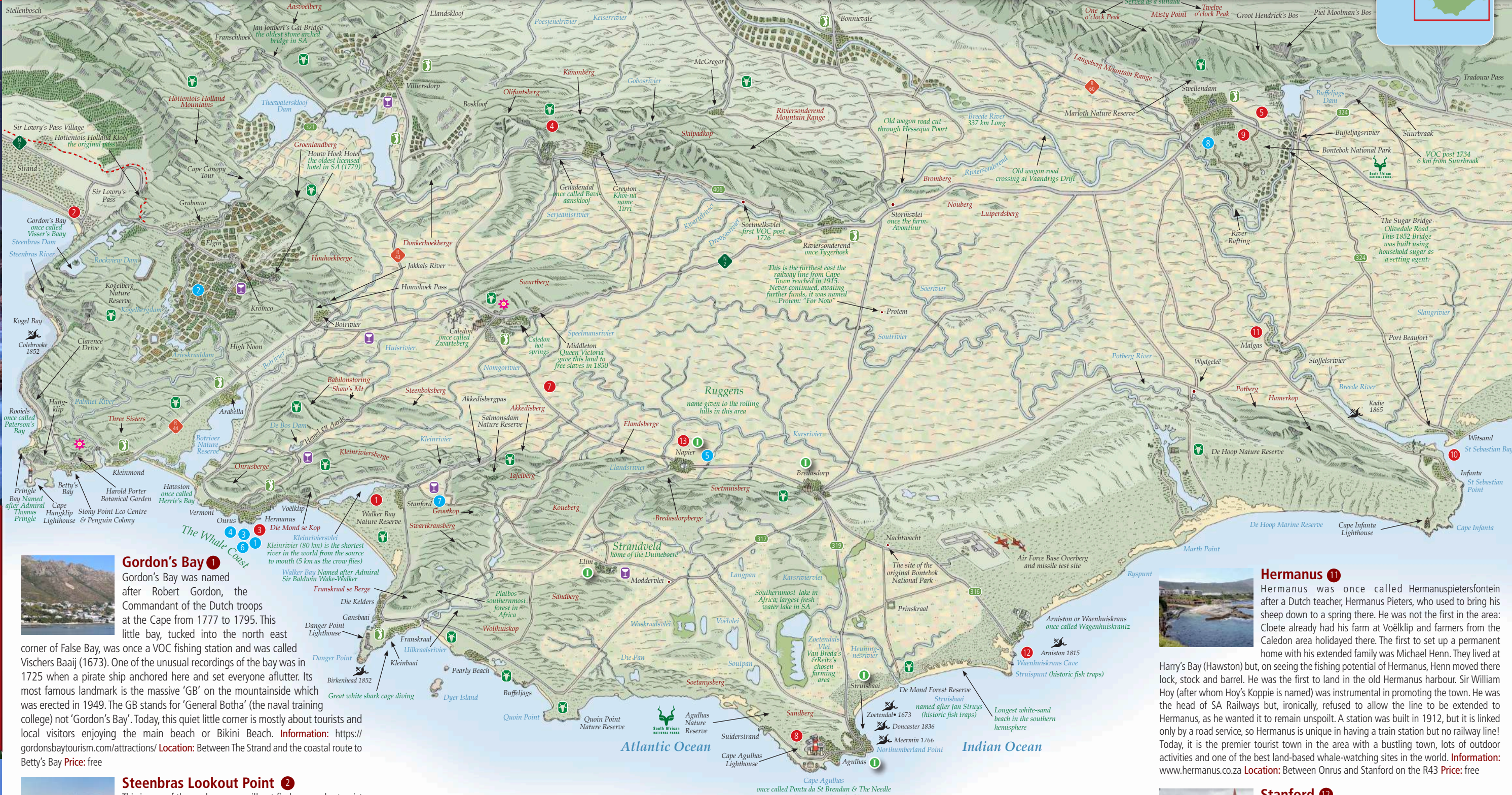
Visit for the day
Enjoy a picnic on the banks of the Breede River, or braai at one of the designated braai spots.

Game viewing
View Bontebok, Grey Rheebuck, red Hartebees as well as many smaller mammals.

Perfectly placed as a base to visit the surrounding areas of Swellendam, Breede River and Buffeljags.

'There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought by shameful strength unhonoured life to seek. Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught to trample down the weak. So we made women with their children go; The oars ply back agen, and yet agen, Whilst inch by inch the drowning ship sank low Still under steadfast men.'

Sir Francis H. Doyle • The Poetic Picture of the Birkenhead



Gordon's Bay 1
Gordon's Bay was named after Robert Gordon, the Commandant of the Dutch troops at the Cape from 1777 to 1795. This little bay, tucked into the north east corner of False Bay, was once a VOC fishing station and was called Vischers Baaij (1673). One of the unusual recordings of the bay was in 1725 when a pirate ship anchored here and set everyone afloater. Its most famous landmark is the massive 'GB' on the mountainside which was erected in 1949. The GB stands for 'General Botha' (the naval training college) not 'Gordon's Bay'. Today, this quiet little corner is mostly about tourists and local visitors enjoying the main beach or Bikini Beach. **Information:** <https://gordonsbaytourism.com/attractions/> **Location:** Between The Strand and the coastal route to Betty's Bay **Price:** free



views of Gordon's Bay, Hottentots Holland Mountain range on the right and the freestanding Helderberg Mountain range overlooking Somerset West. This road was built in the 1940's to service the plant and the Steenbras Dam above it. The dam was the main source of water to Cape Town for the 21st century and, later, in 1979, it was engineered also as a hydroelectric pumped-storage scheme to supplement Cape Town's electricity supply during periods of peak demand. This small pass is also one of the best places to view the power of continental collision when South America smashed into Africa forming Pangaea and, at the same time, our fold mountains between 280 and 235 million years ago - thus the angular rock strata you see today. **Location:** 1 km outside Gordon's Bay on the coastal route (R44) **Price:** free



Steenbras River Gorge 3
A great pastime of outdoor locals is finding and visiting great swimming spots. The Steenbras River Gorge, also known as Crystal Pools, is one of the easiest, to walk to (2.5 km). These pools fall within the Steenbras Nature Reserve and, thus, a permit is required. The upside of needing the permit is that a limited number of people can visit at a time which can put you in a position to have one of the pools all to yourself. There are a number of pools to visit with waterfalls and high rocks that you can utilise to jump into deep water. This area around the pools is the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom, making it the richest plant kingdom in the world, so keep your eyes open for 9,087 different plant species. **Book on line:** www.steenbras.naturereserve@capetown.gov.za (021 856 9622) or do a walk-in - permits at Pitkop near the start of the gorge (087 150 7972) **Location:** About 6 km from Gordon's Bay on Clarence Drive (entrance on the east side of the bridge) **Price:** fee (permit needed)



Clarence Drive 4
The 21 km Clarence Drive with 77 bends, mountains and sheer drop-offs to the sea, has to rank up there as one of the most scenic drives in the world. It all started with a foot path that was developed in the 1600s by wild animals, escaped slaves, deserting soldiers and sailors. In the 1930s, three business partners changed this part of the world forever. Arthur Youlden (after whose daughter, Betty, the township was named), Harold Porter (who later donated his own farm as the basis of the present botanical gardens) and Jack Clarence, after whom the scenic drive is named. Jack Clarence replaced the footpath between Gordon's Bay and Rooi Els with a proper road. It was built with the help of Italian POWs during WW2 and stretches all the way from Gordon's Bay into Kleinmond. Today, you can drive and enjoy this coastal pass on a good quality tarred road with an easy gradient. It has many lookout points where you can stop and take in the views. Two beaches at Kogel Bay and Rooi Els can be visited **Information:** www.kbr.org.za/news/clarence-drive/ **Location:** Between Gordon's Bay and Betty's Bay **Price:** free



Stony Point Penguin Colony 5
Most people are familiar with the penguin colony at Boulders Beach in Simon's Town which gets over 300 000 visitors a year, but not many people know that Stony Point is one of the largest successful breeding colonies of African Penguins in the world (once known locally as the Jackass Penguin). With the declining numbers of off-shore penguin colonies around the African coast, two penguins ventured here in 1982 and decided to make the old Waagat Whaling Station their safe haven. Today their numbers have climbed to roughly 3 600. In 2000, Betty's Bay Marine Protected Area was proclaimed which includes Stony Point. It is now managed by Cape Nature thus increasing their survival along with many other bird species found on this little rocky point. There is a visitors centre, wheelchair friendly boardwalks and a community restaurant adjacent to the Point which sells refreshments and food during the day. **Information:** www.capenature.co.za/reserves/stony-point-nature-reserve/ **Location:** Betty's Bay, off Wallers Road **Price:** Small entry free



Harold Porter Botanical Garden 6
After Harold Porter and his two other business partners acquired the now areas of Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay and Rooi Els as their new development 'Hangklip Beach Estates', Harold established a private nature reserve after a devastating fire in 1940 which he named Shangri-la and opened in 1955. Harold died in 1958 and the garden was given to the National Botanical Gardens of SA where they renamed it in his honour. More areas were added to the small garden including Disa Kloof. Most of the garden today is wild as it represents one of the richest plant kingdoms in the world with its epicentre in this area. Today, visitors can visit a portion of well-manicured garden with over a thousand examples of coastal fynbos, open lawns, an information centre and a restaurant, or they can walk up the kloof and visit waterfalls and rock pools with well maintained paths and walkways. **Information:** www.sanbi.org/gardens/harold-porter/visitor-information/information/ **Location:** Betty's Bay **Price:** Small free



Kogelberg Nature Reserve 7
Most people know that the Western Cape is the smallest and one of the richest of the 6 plant kingdoms in the world and Kogelberg is considered the epicenter of this kingdom with about 1600 plant species. It is also a world-renowned World Heritage Site. The 7,400 acres reserve is made up of mountain ranges and valleys, once the home of San and Khoi. In 1937, it was considered for forestry but Harry Molteno, in the 1950s, managed to secure the area for conservation. In 1987, this area was transferred to Cape Nature. Today, it offers a pristine landscape for hiking, mountain biking, swimming, white water kayaking and overnight accommodation for those who want to stay for longer. **Information:** www.capenature.co.za/reserves/kogelberg-nature-reserve/ **Location:** Entrance on the left hand side of the Palmiet Bridge, Betty's Bay **Price:** small free



Kleinmond 8
Kleinmond is a small town situated in a UNESCO-declared biosphere, surrounded by coastal mountains, the sea and the Bot River estuary. This area was first inhabited by Khoi and San and, later, by a small group of fisherman in the 1800s. In 1910, Lamloch Farm was bought by the Kaplan brothers, which would ultimately become Kleinmond. With the establishment of Clarence Drive in the 40s, the small village has grown exponentially. The attraction of this small coastal town is having the best of both worlds: a beautiful coastline with nature paths, a beach and lagoon where, if you're lucky, you might see the famous wild horses while taking a canoe ride, or the endless trails up high in the mountains in one of the richest plant kingdoms in the world. For those keen on high adventure, sports climbing crags are found close by overlooking the Palmiet River. For a slower paced lifestyle, the many restaurants and old harbour development with its bookshops and craft shops, are worth a visit. For the golfers, there is the Kleinmond nine-hole golf course which has been ranked the third best nine hole course in South Africa. **Information:** www.overberg-info.co.za/region/town/1256 **Location:** Between Betty's Bay and Hermanus on the R44 **Price:** free



Elgin Railway Market 9
Elgin, today, is famous for its apple and fruit farming which was started by Sir Antonie Viljoen in 1898 and later expanded, in 1903, by the Molteno brothers. One year earlier, the railway line had reached Elgin which started servicing the fruit industry. In 2018, Rogor Orpen converted the old apple warehouse on the railway line into a bustling steampunk station where art deco meets Victorian design. This market boasts local vendors, live music, kids entertainment and a getaway place like no other in South Africa. Taking his concept further, Orpen, in partnership with the Ceres Rail Company, brings an old steam train to the market a few times a month. Visitors can book to take a trip on the train or just enjoy the sight of the train pulling into the station. **Information:** www.elginrailwaymarket.co.za **Location:** Oak Avenue, Elgin **Price:** free entry



Hemel en Aarde 10
Tucked away in a beautiful hidden valley between Hermanus and the mountains overlooking Caledon, Hemel en Aarde (heaven and earth) became a perfect wine farming location with its premium cool climate to offer wine lovers world-renowned Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, but also some of our country's best Sauvignon Blanc and Shiraz. These farms are well worth a visit on a lazy country drive. This valley was known as Attaquaskoof and was leased as a loan farm to Gerrit Mos in 1739. In 1814, a leprous sanctuary was established in the valley and, by 1823, the Moravian Church took an active role. By 1846, however, the institution was moved to Robben Island. **Information:** <https://www.overstrand.gov.za/en/documents/town-planning/strategic-documents-1/heritage-survey-overstrand-june-2009/1315-hemel-en-aarde/file> **Location:** Between Onrus and Caledon **Price:** free



Hermanus 11
Hermanus was once called Hermanuspietersfontein after a Dutch teacher, Hermanus Pieters, who used to bring his sheep down to a spring there. He was not the first in the area: Cloete already had his farm at Voëlklop and farmers from the Caledon area holidayed there. The first to set up a permanent home with his extended family was Michael Henn. They lived at Harry's Bay (Hawston) but, on seeing the fishing potential of Hermanus, Henn moved there lock, stock and barrel. He was the first to land in the old Hermanus harbour. Sir William Hoy (after whom Hoy's Koppie is named) was instrumental in promoting the town. He was the head of SA Railways but, ironically, refused to allow the line to be extended to Hermanus, as he wanted it to remain unspoilt. A station was built in 1912, but it is linked only by a road service, so Hermanus is unique in having a train station but no railway line! Today, it is the premier tourist town in the area with a bustling town, lots of outdoor activities and one of the best land-based whale-watching sites in the world. **Information:** www.hermanus.co.za **Location:** Between Onrus and Stanford on the R43 **Price:** free



Stanford 12
This village was named after Captain Robert Stanford. He had left the Royal Navy to farm in this area, but was still on half-pay and so subject to the Navy's whims. When the British government tried to offload 300 Irish agitators from the Neptune at the Cape, the Cape Boers and British settlers presented a united front to prevent this from happening (they were finally sent to Australia). For three months, no one broke ranks, but Earl Grey, knowing Stanford's obligation, blackmailed him into supplying the Neptune which was docked in Simonstown. After this incident, the people of the Cape ostracized him. He was rewarded with a knighthood and paid a pittance, but lost his friends, his businesses and his wealth. He left for England, a broken man, never to return. Today, this historic little village on the banks of the Klein River, boasts many delights from the Victorian Vernacular architecture, antique stores, restaurants, vineyards or coffee shops. For the more adventurous, there is horse riding, boat cruises, canoeing, hikes and bird watching. This village is also central to all the other attractions in the area. **Information:** www.stanfordinfo.co.za **Location:** Between Hermanus and Gansbaai, junction of the R43 and R326 **Price:** free



De Kelders 13
The name comes from the Afrikaans word meaning 'the cellars'. The name is derived from the numerous formation limestone caves formed from dunes on underlying Table Mountain sandstone during the Pliocene period. Caves are found all along the sea cliffs in this area and many can be explored at your leisure. A little further up in the Walker Bay Nature Reserve (CapeNature), are some of the oldest remains of the activities of modern man who visited and lived in the cave for at least 70 000 years. This site is one of the most remarkable examples of early human dwellings in South Africa to date. Excellent boardwalks and information boards make this a worthwhile experience. De Kelders is also a wonderful land-based whale watching location because of the high cliffs. For those who want to relax, there are many little secluded spots and beaches where you can let time pass you by. **Information:** www.overberg-info.co.za/region/town/183/de-kelders **Location:** 14 km past Stanford on the R43 and just before Gansbaai **Price:** free and small fee



Gansbaai 14
As the story is told, the small fishing town was founded by an 18-year-old fisherman from Stanford, Johannes Cornelius Wessels, in 1881. Others soon followed. The town is named after the Egyptian gods that gathered at the freshwater fountain in the present-day harbour. The town flourished during WWII, supplying processed sharks' livers for Vitamin A and lubricant. After the war, fish-orientated businesses and factories became the backbone of this small haven, helped by setting up the first Fishery Cooperative in South Africa. With the advent of the new South Africa, international tourists, seeking out new adventures, discovered Gansbaai and its marine wonders. The town has become the Great White Shark capital of the world with cage diving and boat-based sighting. Whale, seal and other types of sharks are engaged with from both land and sea bases. **Information:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gansbaai> **Location:** Between De Kelders and Danger Point on the R43 **Price:** free

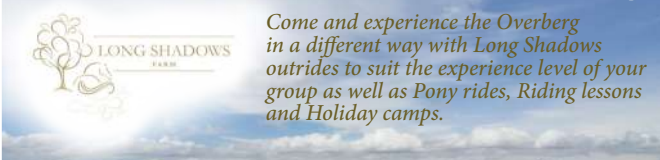
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Danger Point ¹⁵

Just past Gansbaai, on a windswept, rugged and wild peninsula, is home to one of the most famous maritime shipwrecks in the world. In 1852, the troopship, HMS Birkenhead, was wrecked off Danger Point, what makes this wreck famous is it was the first time the "women and children first" protocol was ever applied. Another maritime first for this area was the ghost ship, the *Flying Dutchman* (made popular by the film, *The Pirates of the Caribbean*), was first officially reported sighted off this point. Today, there are hiking trails, exploring and the lighthouse to visit. It was built in 1894 and stands 18.3 m tall. Visitors can climb the steps to the top of the lighthouse for a stunning 360° view, sometimes as far as Cape Point. **Information:** https://xplore.com/gansbaai/en/about/areas/danger-point/ **Location:** off the R43 just past Gansbaai at Franskraal, Dyer Street, Lord Roberts Street and at the end of Kabeljou Street **Price:** free

Salmonsdam Nature Reserve ¹⁶

Tucked away in the Perdeberg mountains is a secluded nature reserve run by CapeNature. The reserve is named after Captain Robert Salmond of the ill-fated HMS Birkenhead which sank at Danger Point in 1852. The attraction to this little reserve is its total isolation with the finest examples of mountain fynbos all set with a backdrop of mountains, rivers, waterfalls and gorges. There is an abundance of bird life and larger mammals including bontebok, klipspringer, grey dukker and grey rhebok, as well as baboons and numerous small mammals. Within the reserve are three trails, each with their own focal points from high viewing points, waterfalls, indigenous forest, caves and gorges. Accommodation is camping and three basic overnight cabins which reflect the rustic wildness of this unspoilt area. **Information:** http://www.capenature.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Salmonsdam-Map-and-Brochure.pdf **Location:** Half way between Standford and elim **Price:** fee/Booking

Elim ¹⁷

This mission village was established in 1824 in the Sandveld area. It is named after an oasis mentioned in the Bible (Exodus 15:27). The need for the establishment of a new mission station arose because Genadendal and Mamre missions were full and an influx of new members, as a result of the ending of slavery in 1834. A visit to this village reveals a place preserved in time with historical buildings and a traditional way of life. For 150 years, Elim's main source of income was dried *sevejaartjies* (everlasting flowers) used for funerals and by churches in Europe. The petals were also used as pillow and mattress stuffing. The introduction of pigs to this community in 1930 by a German started the well-known Elim processed meat business. Another business that Elim is known for is tatching; their thatchers are renowned throughout South Africa. There is an information centre near the water mill but, if it is unmanned, a stroll around the village is worth it with its combination of Victorian buildings, a Cape Dutch styled church and the numerous simple styled workers houses reflecting the time period. **Information:** https://www.overberg-info.co.za/region/town/185 **Location:** On the R43 between Pearly Beach and Bredasdorp **Price:** free

Napier ¹⁸

This town, started in 1838, is unnaturally close for its time to Bredasdorp which is just down the road. This came about because of the rivalry between Pieter van der Bijl and Michiel van Breda who had made their fortunes on the back of the merino sheep industry. Each wanted a church (around which a town would be established) to be built on their farms. To settle the dispute, the church authorities decided two churches would be built. Van der Bijl's town was named after the governor of the Cape at the time. Today, the attraction of this small picturesque town, at the foot of the Soetmuisberg, is one of real relaxing, taking in country life at a leisurely pace and enjoying the arts and culture that the locals thrive on. **Information:** https://xplore.com/napier/co.za **Location:** Between Caledon and Bredasdorp on the R316 **Price:** free

Bredasdorp ¹⁹

With the precedent that you could only build a town around a church, the competition between Napier just up the road, and Bredasdorp (Michiel van Breda's town) was won only in terms of becoming the main economic and service hub of the region starting with the merino sheep industry and later wheat, canola, milk, and indigenous fynbos cultivation. As a tourist attraction, Bredasdorp includes the Heuningberg Nature Reserve, many historical churches and buildings, art galleries and craft shops. It also has a one of a kind in the southern hemisphere with the Shipwreck Museum which tells the stories of the 150 wrecks along the nearby Agulhas coast. **Information:** https://xplore.com/bredasdorp/ **Location:** Between Napier and Arniston on the R316 **Price:** free

SANParks Agulhas Nature Reserve ²⁰

This is a place of rugged isolation where you feel you are at the end of the world which, in a manner of speaking, you are, as it is located on the southern most tip of Africa. After acknowledging the evidence of the early inhabitants that lived here for thousands of years, the reserve had its beginnings as farms and grazing rights as far back as the

early 1700s. Some of the old cottages used today as accommodation are the original farm houses. This park was established in 1998 by SANParks and was extended in 2001. The attraction of this park is an inhospitable coastline with beaches and rugged rocky cliffs and outcrops with miles of open plains containing 2000 species of indigenous plants including 100 of which are endemic to the area and over 110 Red Data Book species. For a harsh area like this, it also has many wetlands with abundant birdlife of over 21 000 migrant and resident wetland birds estimated to occur in the area annually. Close to the park is Cape Agulhas, the historic lighthouse and Struisbaai and its harbour. **Information:** https://www.sanparks.org/parks/agulhas/all.php **Location:** next to Cape Agulhas and Struisbaai **Price:** free

Cape Agulhas ²¹

Ponta da St Brendan, Cabo das Agulhas and Cape of the Needles are some of the names given to this inhospitable part of the world by early explorers who rounded the southern-most point of Africa for their quest to find the Far East and its riches. It was Bartolomeu Dias, in 1488, who takes the honours as the first European to round the most southern tip of Africa. In 1987, there was only a rock cairn to let people know of the spot were the Indian and Atlantic oceans meet and, more importantly, the southern most point in Africa, the next stop being Antarctica. In 2019, this spot was upgraded with a massive 30m circumference 3D handmade sculpture of Africa designed by architects and land artists, including Strijdom van der Merwe, and using local labour as part of the initiative. Walkways, an upgrade to the approach road and information boards, were erected making it a far more memorable experience for visitors. **Information:** https://www.sanparks.org/parks/agulhas/ **Location:** Southern-most tip of Africa near the end of the R319, Struisbaai **Price:** small fee



Cape Agulhas Lighthouse ²²

The seas around the South African coast are ranked as some of the most dangerous waters in the world with Cape Agulhas bearing the testimony of hundreds of shipwrecks. By 1837, there was a call for a lighthouse to be built at the southern-most tip of Africa, but it was only in 1849 that it was designed, built and completed by Charles Michell and about

90 workmen. This makes it the second oldest lighthouse in South Africa after the Green Point Lighthouse in Cape Town. The lighthouse is built in the Egyptian revival style, based on the design of the ancient lighthouse of Pharos, one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the world and it is constructed from limestone. It stands 27 m high, with a light character of a single flash every 5 seconds. Today, visitors can experience a well kept lighthouse with a museum of the history of shipping and shipwrecks around this area and, for an extra fee, one can climb the old ladders to the top and walk the exposed Gallery Deck and see the Lantern room up close. **Information:** https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/cape-agulhas-lighthouse-begins-operating **Location:** Southern-most tip of Africa near the end of the R319, Struisbaai **Price:** Small fee



Struisbaai ²³

This area on the southern tip of Africa has been home to humans for thousands of years with fish traps and archeological finds as evidence. It was only in the 1400s that Europeans first saw it when they were finding their sea passage to the East. There is no date to signify the establishment of this town as it just evolved from people from

around the area moving in because of the fishing potential in the late 1800s. Its name could come from one of three sources, all with Afrikaans or Dutch origins; 'straw', 'ostriches' or 'huge' (referring to the longest single beach in the southern hemisphere found here). Today, besides the fishing industry and its harbour built in 1959, it has become a tourist attraction with its iconic thatched roofed fishing cottages, resident skates who feed out of your hand in the harbour, endless beaches and it is within minutes of Cape Agulhas and the lighthouse. **Information:** https://xplore.com/agulhas/en/about/history/ **Location:** From Bredasdorp take the R319 towards the coast **Price:** free

De Mond Forest Reserve ²⁴

This small coastal nature reserve was established in 1986 and is run by CapeNature. It is also a Ramsar site so great for bird watching and a World Heritage site, unspoilt and far away from any town or village. Its focal point is the Heuningnes River which runs through the middle of the reserve. For nature lovers, there is something for everyone from riverine vegetation (salt water and fresh), salt marshes, dune Milkwood forests, permanent dunes and 14 km of uninterrupted beach at the river mouth, making it the longest beach in the Southern Hemisphere. Visitors can enjoy a picnic under shady trees along the banks of the river, or explore the reserve on one of the beautiful hiking trails. Other activities include angling, swimming and whale watching. There is one cottage available for accommodation but other places can be found close to the reserve. Day trippers are welcome. **Information:** https://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/de-mond-nature-reserve/ **Location:** from Bredasdorp take the R319 towards Struisbaai, turn left towards Prinskraal and then right on De Mond Road **Price:** free



Waenhuiskrans Cave ²⁵

One of the big attractions of the small coastal town of Arniston is a massive sea cave, the biggest in South Africa without a supporting pillar. The cave used to be called Holkrantz but, for many years, it was called Waenhuiskrans (wagon horse cliff) and this name won over. The name of the cave comes from the legend that the cave is big enough to turn an ox wagon with a full span of oxen around inside, which is true if you could get them in there. The rock housing this cave was deposited around 2.6 million years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago. They are calcareous clastics and are part of the Bredasdorp Group which were deposited as shallow marine deposits and aeolian deposits (wind blown deposits). One can visit the cave by a small entrance on the east side along a rock shelf, where a small entrance is found under an overhang that takes you into the main cave. There are no walk ways or manmade structures to help you into the cave so some easy scrambling is needed. **Information:** https://xplore.com/arniston/en/blog/great-outdoors/14716/through-the-eyes-of-the-waenhuiskrans-cave/ **Location:** Arniston **Price:** free

Arniston ²⁶

This town is named after the famous wreck of the Arniston, a British East India Company ship, that was wrecked in 1815. It ran aground onto the rocks at Waenhuiskrans. Only six of the 378 people onboard survived. The town is a historic fishing village, officially known as Waenhuiskrans after the large limestone sea cave of that name. On the beaches, you may still find pumice stones which floated 7000 km as a result of the

1883 volcanic eruption of Krakatoa. During WWII, Nazi supporters supplied fresh produce and diesel to the U-boats and legend has it that there were clandestine tennis matches played on the beach with the Germans. Today, the attraction as a getaway destination, besides just relaxing, is the lime-washed and thatched fishing village which is a national monument, the picture poster card colourful fishing boats, the beaches and sea cliffs and the Waenhuiskrans Cave. **Information:** https://www.arnistonhotel.com/ **Location:** The end of the R316 from Bredasdorp towards the sea. **Price:** free

De Hoop Nature Reserve ²⁷

De Hoop is best known for its landbased whale watching between May and October but, given what this area offers, it is worth visiting any time of year. This reserve is one of the larger nature areas in the Overberg measuring 60 000 hectares with 78 different mammal species which would naturally be found here and 259 different species of birds. The

landscape has 6 distinct zones of interest from a Marine Protected Area, a vegetated dune zone, mobile dunes, limestone dunes and cliffs and sandstone found near to Potberg. It also has the largest conserved area of rare lowland fynbos in the world. The history of Stone Age man, Khoi and European settlers in the 1700s is evident within the reserve. This reserve can be explored on foot or mountain bike; there is snorkelling, scenic game drives and quad bikes. The reserve is open to day visitors and is well catered for overnighters who can camp or stay in the wide range of accommodation available. **Information:** http://www.capenature.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/De-Hoop-text.pdf **Location:** Between Bredasdorp and Malgas **Price:** free

Whale Trail ²⁸

Within the De Hoop Nature Reserve, hikers can find one of the finest five day hiking trails in the country. This hike of 55 km has two parts to it. The first is the Potberg, a quartz-rich sandstone mountain with an elevation of 600m, which is the remains of the Cape Fold Mountains which were formed 400-500 million years ago and folded and uplifted during the forming of the super continent, Pangaea. The attraction of this section is the rich fynbos, mountain ridges and gorges and, if you are lucky, maybe a sighting of the elusive Cape vulture. The second section runs along the coast, taking in the best example of the Bredasdorp Group 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago, calcareous clastics sea cliffs with overhangs, caves and holes. These sea cliffs offer the best landbased whale watching in the world. The trail then gives way to long beaches and intertidal pools on wavecut rock platforms and, if you see them, coral reefs are remarkable quite to behold. The trail ends through coastal thickets, at Kopale Alleen. **Information:** www.capenature.co.za/reserves/de-hoop-nature-reserve/ **Location:** De Hoop Nature Reserve **Price:** free

Witsand and Port Beaufort ²⁹

Witsand is found on the eastern bank of the Breede River mouth. It was first charted by Portuguese explorers in 1488 as a promising natural anchorage and was later named St. Sebastian's Bay. In 1820, Captain Benjamin Moodie established the Port Beaufort Trading Company to take goods from this part of the

Overberg to Cape Town by sea. His business was later overshadowed by Joseph Barry & Nephews business in 1822 who had their base at Malgas and a warehouse at Port Beaufort. With all this trading up and down the river, Port Beaufort was declared a port in 1841. During WWII, the local shopkeeper supplied diesel to German U-Boats. Witsand was proclaimed a town in 1909. In the early 20th century, settlers started erecting accommodation next to the Breede River mouth on land owned by the Moodie family and, from there on, it became a holiday getaway destination with all its advantages of a river, sea and beautiful beaches. **Information:** http://www.overberg.co.za/content/view/151/28/ **Location:** End of the R324 south from Buffeljagsrivier near Swellendam **Price:** free

Malgas ³¹

This little settlement is found 48 km up river on the Breede River and its name comes from the Afrikaans word for gannet (type of bird) which more then likely was derived from the original Portuguese word, mangas de velludo, "velvet sleeves", referring to the Cape gannet. Malgas was the inland trading port of Joseph Barry & Nephews business in 1822 as it was far more cost-effective to bring goods in and out of the Overberg via water then overland from Cape Town. This made Barry the richest person in the Overberg to the point of printing his own money. Today, the main attraction is the 120 m river crossing on the famous pont which has been in operation since 1914. It is probably the oldest, and only, manually operated cross-river ferry in South Africa. A bridge was never built here as, with the loss of Joseph Barry's business in 1885, the commercial value of this inland port never recovered but, with its beautiful setting, it has become a holiday get-away spot with holiday houses, lodges and some hotels. **Information:** https://xplore.com/swellendam/en/about/areas/malgas/ **Location:** Between Swellendam and Infanta **Price:** free

Bontebok National Park ³²

In 1837, there were only 27 Bontebok left on the planet. On his farm, Nachtwacht, near Bredasdorp, Alexander van der Bijl made it his goal to increase the numbers. By 1927, there were 77 in the area and 44 in Swellendam. A dedicated reserve for these buck was called for, resulting in the establishment of the Bontebok National Park run by

SANParks. This park is located on the southern edge of the town of Swellendam and is bordered by the Breede River on the west, one of the largest rivers in the Western Cape. Besides the Bontebok being the central reason for this park, the other attractions are a diversity of indigenous animal life including over 200 bird species and endangered fynbos veld type, coastal Renosterveld. These attractions can be seen and experienced by car, hiking trails or on a mountain bike. Other drawcards are the breathtaking views of the Langeberg mountains, fishing, swimming and canoeing/kayaking is allowed. This park caters for day visitors in the form of picnic spots and braai areas and visitors wanting to stay longer have the choice of chalets or camping spots. **Information:** https://www.sanparks.org/parks/bontebok/ **Location:** Swellendam **Price:** free

Sulina's Faerie Sanctuary ³³

Sulina is not a "business" or "tourist attraction" as stated on their website. It is a Special Sanctuary, and home of Ian and Minky Sulin who have, over 28 years, grown this sanctuary lovingly for Faeries and Angels, for the sole purpose of re-connecting everyone who passes by to the Natural World, and making them aware of her loving Caretakers and Guardians!

For any child or adult who is passing through, this is one of the most refreshing visits in the Overberg where one can only leave this place with joy, happiness and a sense that the ethereal world is as important as the tangible one. Within the sanctuary are the "Adoption Centre" for all the unique creatures, "The Enchanted Garden" and places where one can bring a picnic and spend the day with your children or spend the day with the child within you. **Information:** https://continentofsulina.co.za/ **Location:** 37 Buitekant Street, Swellendam, **Price:** small fee

Swellendam ³⁴

Swellendam holds the title as the third oldest town in South Africa. Early Europeans had visited this area to trade with the local Khoi as far back as the mid 1600s and, by 1682, it was reported that all the wood had been cut out of this area by settlers. In 1745, the town had developed enough for the VOC to declare it a magisterial district and, in the same year, they

built the Drostdy Building for administration purposes. The small town was then named after the Cape Governor, Hendrik Swellengrebel (the first Cape-born man to occupy this rank) and his wife, Helena ten Damme. Years later, in 1795, due to VOC maladministration, corruption and inadequacies the burghers of Swellendam revolted and declared themselves a Republic. The Republic was short-lived and was ended months later when the Cape was occupied by the British. With the arrival of British settlers in the early 19th century, the Overberg boomed and Swellendam was soon the heart of the mercantile empire of Barry and Nephews with their own currency, which dominated trade in the area up until 1870. Today, this beautiful area, under the shadows of the Langeberg Mountain Range, has become a getaway destination for local and overseas travellers and, for some, a preferred retirement home. Its location puts you in a good position to visit all the attractions near by such as the Breede River, Marloth Nature Reserve, Suurbraak, Tradouw Pass and the Bontebok National Park. Within the town one is taken back in time with many of the original Cape Dutch vernacular homes with their splendid gables lining the edges of the main street. Not to be missed is the Drostdy Museum, Old Gaol and Ambagswerf and the Dutch Reformed church with its mix of architectural styles with Baroque gables and Gothic windows which somehow work together. **Information:** www.visitswellendam.co.za **Location:** Between Riviersonderend and Heidelberg on the N2 **Price:** free

Drostdy Museum, Swellendam ³⁵

As Swellendam is a large town with many attractions, it is worth giving more information on a site that focuses on its past as an important centre in the Overberg. This building houses the 'Landdros', the administrator of the district. The Drostdy was built by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1747 to serve as a residence and official headquarters followed by a gaol, a house for the secretary, a mill and various outbuildings. It was in this building, in 1795, that the people of Swellendam overthrew the landdrost and formed their own constitution and new separate colony in true Jacobin style. This was short lived as, a few months later, the British took control of the Cape. Today, visitors can experience well-preserved time period buildings with exhibits to match. **Information:** http://www.drostdymuseum.co.za/ **Location:** 18 Swellengrebel Street, Swellendam **Price:** small fee

Marloth Nature Reserve ³⁶

Between the town of Swellendam and the summits of the Langeberg Mountain Range is a hidden gem of gorges, waterfalls and indigenous forests. This reserve is well known for the 5 day Swellendam trail but it also caters for day visitors who want a few hours in nature. For those who want to overnight but do not want to do the trail, there is a cottage to stay in. The reserve is run by Cape Nature and named after the pioneer botanist who, together with a deputation of Swellendam residents, petitioned the Minister of Lands and Forestry in 1928 to set aside part of the mountain as a nature reserve. The reserve offers the chance to picnic, mountain bike, horse ride, hike, go birding or just to find your own spot next to a waterfall and relax. **Information:** https://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/marloth-nature-reserve/ **Location:** Swellendam **Price:** free

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Buffeljags Dam ³⁷

This area was first established by Trek Boers in the early 1700s to get away from Cape Town and the stifling VOC interference and meddling. Not to be outdone, the VOC established the first VOC outpost in this area to maintain some control over the burghers. Today, this valley is known for its deciduous fruit orchards and farming. The Buffeljags Dam, built in 1967, has

fishing, birding, swimming, water sports, canoeing, hiking, a zip-line and is a must for overnight visitors looking for some outdoor relaxation and/or adventure, all set in a beautiful location on the edge of the Langeberg Mountain Range. Lodges and campsites are available. **Information:** www.umshanti.co.za/ **Location:** Buffeljags **Price:** fee



Suurbraak ³⁸

Suurbraak was established in 1812, close to a 1734 VOC outpost, at the request of the Attaqua chief who wanted a mission station started in his area by the London Missionary Society. Dr John Phillip, and subsequently three generations of the Helm family, served the mission station. Today, Suurbraak is known for the manufacture of brooms for tourists and 'Van Gogh' chairs. One of its claims to fame involves dogs: early explorers at the Cape noted that Khoi-na dogs had an unusual ridge of hair down their backs. Charles Helm crossed these with European dogs to get the type of dog he wanted. He subsequently took some of his dogs to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where the breed, which became extremely popular worldwide, became known as the Rhodesian Ridgeback. **Information:** https://www.sa-venues.com/attractions/w/suurbraak.php **Location:** Between Swellendam and Tradouw Pass on the R324 **Price:** free

Tradouw Pass ³⁹

The 17 km Tradouw Pass has been ranked as one of the most spectacular tarred road passes in the Western Cape. This pass is a easy drive with an altitude range of 219 m which uses the only gap through the Langeberg Mountain Range within this area. The attraction is towering walls with folded and contorted rock strata which tell a story of between 280 and 235 million years ago during the creation of Pangaea. This pass was first used as a foot path by the indigenous people, the Khoi-na, which they named Tradouw (meaning 'women's path').

With the arrival of European settlers and the growth of farming activity on both sides of the mountain, a pass was needed to join the towns of Barydale and Swellendam. John Barry, the richest man in the Swellendam area and farmers on the northern side of the mountain, requested the government for the pass which was built by Thomas Bain in 1873. After the completion of the pass, it was named Southey's Pass after the Colonial Secretary, Robert Southey, but the locals kept on calling it Tradouw Pass which won out in the end. Since the 1800s, the pass has been extensively revamped. The engineering teams have done an outstanding job of preserving the environment and retaining Thomas Bain's character in the design and supporting stonework. **Information:** http://www.overberg.co.za/content/view/124/28/ **Location:** R324, Between Suurbraak and Barydale **Price:** free

Riviersonderend ⁴⁰

This area was first settled by the Khoi-na before the colonial period. In 1842 the Vigne brothers acquired Tyterhoek (original name of the area) where by it remained in the family for 120 years. The town of Riviersonderend was established in 1922 when Edith McIntyre sold the farm (then Tierhoek) to the church council to establish a congregation. Nudeword was the

first name suggested but an Afrikaans variation of the Khoi-na name Kanna-kam-kanna (meaning 'water, never-ending water') was chosen. Today, this small town is mainly a pistop on the N2 to may but, given the chance, this area offers many attractions from time period architecture, a photo museum, quaint shops and many outdoor pursuits such as 4x4 trails, hiking trails, kloofing, swimming, historical walks and more then well priced golf. **Information:** https://xplore.com/riviersonderend/en/about/top-attractions/ **Location:** N2 between Caledon and Swellendam **Price:** free

Bonnievale ⁴¹

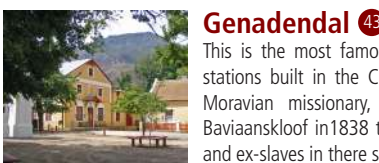
This small town was started by Christopher Forrest Rigg and his wife in 1900. Bonnievale means Beautiful Valley to honour his grandfather's home back in Scotland. Their only surviving daughter, Mary Myrtle was born in 1903. Sadly, in 1911, she contracted meningitis and, on her deathbed, she asked her father to build her a small church which he did. The Mary Myrtle

Rigg Church is the only church in the town known to be built at the request of a child. Rigg also constructed the water channel scheme providing Bonnievale with water. In 1902, a railway halt was constructed here named the 'Vale' but, with his persistence, in 1917, the halt received full railway station status and the name changed to Bonnievale. In 1922, a village management board was elected and, later, in 1953, the town received full municipal status. Today, people visit this sleepy little town to relax and gear down, taking in the scenery on the banks of the Breede River, enjoying its wine, cheeses, boat cruises and aesthetic lifestyle. **Information:** https://www.info-bonnievale.co.za/en/info/history.html **Location:** Between Robertson and Stormsvel on the R317 **Price:** free

Greyton ⁴²

This quiet corner in the Riviersonderend mountain range has become popular as a weekend escape for city dwellers and has a small permanent community. In 1791, Weltveden was granted as a loan farm to M W Theunissen. It passed through a number of owners before being divided into 120 narrow plots with a leivater system for cultivation. By 1854, all the plots had

been sold or let. This quaint little settlement might have been rather different today if Thomas Bain, the renowned pass builder, had his way and built a pass over the mountain connecting Greyton with McGregor. You can walk this route on the Boesmanskloof Trail today. Nowadays, Greyton is better known for its slow pace of life with roadside cafés, art galleries, craft shops, antique shops, slow walks around the neighbourhood viewing historical buildings and leisurely drives along farm back roads. For the more energetic, there are numerous hiking trails, mountain biking and close-by natural rock pools in the gorge to swim in. **Information:** www.greytontourism.com/ **Location:** Just before Caledon (CT side) take the R406, just past Genadendal **Price:** free



Genadendal ⁴³

This is the most famous and well preserved of the mission stations built in the Cape in the 1700s. George Schmidt, a Moravian missionary, established this mission station at Baviaanskloof in 1838 to help the remaining Khoi inhabitants and ex-slaves in their spiritual and physical needs. This mission was later named Genadendal (vale of grace). In 1742, he had a

run-in with the Dutch Reformed Church over baptismal rights, as a result of which he was pressurised to leave the Cape. The story should go that everything fell apart once he left but, in 1792, the Moravians sent three missionaries to see what had become of Baviaanskloof. To their surprise, they found an 81-year-old woman (one of the first converts) had kept the place alive. This safe haven flourished, attracting more Khoi-na and so-called 'coloureds', much to the disgust of local farmers as their work force moved here. In 1795, the British had taken over the Cape and they made a point of protecting the mission station. They also lifted a building ban which the Dutch had imposed to try to derail progress. The mission station flourished and became a place of spiritual peace, learning, printing, manufacturing and farming. Over time, the local farmers came to accept the community and even attended their church services. Nelson Mandela, who visited this mission station in 1959, renamed his official residence in Cape Town, Genadendal. Today, visitors are able to visit its information centre and stroll its grounds. **Information:** http://www.greytontourism.com/activity/genadendal-historic-village-and-museum/ **Location:** Between Caledon and Greyton on the R 406 **Price:** free



Caledon Hot Springs ⁴⁴

This hot spring was one of the first of the hot springs in the Cape to be discovered by early European settlers before the end and was known as 'Bad agter de Berg' - Bath Behind the Mountain. The Khoi had been using this spring for many years before their arrival but, in 1797, a permanent bath house was erected over the springs and a small town developed around it. This town was once called

Zwarteberg but, in 1813, Sir John Cradock renamed it after the Earl of Caledon. Europeans attributed healing properties to the iron-rich waters and opened a sick house and later a sanatorium. In the 1890s, its water was entered into the World Mineral Spring Contest at Chicago where it took first place. Today, with modern infrastructure and a casino and spa, it has become one of the premium attractions in the Overberg. **Information:** https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/caledon-cape-overberg **Location:** Caledon **Price:** fee

Venster Kloof Nature Garden ⁴⁵

Venster Kloof gets its name from a particularly noticeable rock formation that forms a window or 'venster'. The garden is landscaped with quaint pathways, wooden bridges and beautiful picnic areas on land bequeathed to the municipality by Queen Victoria in 1899. The garden was established in 1927 and forms part of the greater nature reserve on the

Swartberg Mountain. Besides the main garden, there is 10km of hiking in natural mountain fynbos and an amazing selection of more than 135 Protea flower species, as well as Blue Crane which are synonymous with the Overberg. Caledon holds the distinction, starting in 1891, of being the second town to establish an annual flower show in South Africa. Venster Kloof has kept up this tradition with an annual wildflower show held here every September when the flowers are at their best. Keep in mind this garden is not in the same league or placed like Kirstenbosch Garden and thus is a bit rustic and might seem wild in locations. **Information:** www.caledontourism.com **Location:** Just off the N2 above the Town of Caledon, turn into Hoop Street just next to Venter Restaurant. **Price:** small fee

Theewaterskloof Dam ⁴⁶

Part of Cape Town's history is one of running out of water - from the dams that were first built on Table Mountain in 1897 which provided enough water for a few years, to Steenbras Dam, built in 1921, which was meant to fix the water problem. With the growth of the city, a mega dam had to be built. Theewaterskloof Dam was open for business in 1980 and is the largest dam in

the Western Cape Water Supply System. The dam wall is 37.5 m high and can hold back 480 million cubic metres of water with a surface area of 5 059 ha. Today, visitors can enjoy swimming, boating, fishing, camping, hiking, skiing, golfing and guest houses on the waters edge. The dam caters for day visitors and overnight stays. **Information:** https://theewater.co.za/sportsclub/images/docs/club/tsc_resource_management.pdf **Location:** On the R45 between Villiersdorp and Franschhoek. **Price:** free

McGregor ⁴⁷

Like Greyton, this small little village, nestled up against the flanks of the Riviersonderend mountains, has, in the last 10 to 20 years, been discovered as a great getaway destination and, for some, a new permanent residence. McGregor is the best preserved and most complete example of mid-nineteenth century townscape in the Cape Province, with its traditional,

whitewashed, thatched cottages set in quiet streets, surrounded by mountains, wildlife, and wine estates. In the 1700s, farmers migrated to this region in search of good farming lands and they found it. Many settled and a church was first built, and the town grew around it. The town was first named Lady Grey in 1861, but changed its name in