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In 1687, Simon van der Stel surveyed False Bay in order to find a safe winter anchorage at the Cape. Table Bay had proven to be a bad winter anchorage with the violent northwesterly gales wreaking havoc with ships in the bay. He chose Yzelstein's Bay and renamed it after himself. It remained the Cape primary winter anchorage until a safe harbour was built in Cape Town.



1 Elsie's Peak Hike
This peak, at 303 m, is only 3 m higher than the Effel Tower in Paris but, what it lacks in height, is more than made up for with breathtaking views of the Cape Peninsula. It is an easy walk up with no technical difficulties. No one knows who the first person to climb it was, but the first recorded climb was by G. Travers Jackson at the beginning of the 1900s when he climbed Outlook Ridge. The origin of the name 'Elsie's Peak' is still a mystery; it could be named after Elze River in the Glencairn valley or after a ship, the Eselstein, which stopped over at Simon's Town bay in 1671.

2 Glencairn Quarry
This historic sandstone quarry supplied building material to Simon's Town and greater Cape Town. The quarried stone was transported by the newly built railway line to Simon's Town which was constructed in the same year that the Divisional Council opened the quarry in 1938. It was closed for a brief period between 1914 and 1918 during the Great War. The quarry was taken over by Strong & Moore for a number of years before it was closed permanently in 1978. Today, the old quarry has a new lease on life as a shooting range with False Bay Firearms Training Academy.

3 Cape Glass Factory
The ruins of a short-lived venture of the Cape Glass Company Ltd can be visited in Glencairn Heights, right in the midst of suburbia. The glass was extracted from the west sand dunes which covered nearly the whole of the valley. Olsson's Cape Breweries had a large stake in this business but, over a short period of time, it was not profitable and closed only 3 years later in 1905. The one accomplishment worth being among the first glass factories in the world established to manufacture bottles solely by machine.

4 Glencairn Beach
This beautiful little beach is often overlooked, which is a good thing for those who like their own space. There is a boat pool for the little ones and it is one of the best spots for whale-watching in season. It was on this beach in 1968 that a coloured man, 24 year old Clive Hawke, collapsed and died; his heart was used (in the then Apartheid South Africa) behind this beach, which caused much contention in the Apartheid South Africa. Behind this beach, on the other side of the road, a walk around the view on well-marked paths will reveal abundant bird life.

5 Glencairn Private Museum
This beautiful site on the original site of the Zoutman Battery, built in 1793 under the VOC. Two years later the Dutch abandoned the battery after spiking their guns before the Battle of Muizenberg. The British took control of the battery and renamed it the North Battery. Upgrades to the battery started in 1806 and then in Sheerness, England until 1885. It was lastly mounted in 1881 and the battery became the Gunner's School's firing range which saw the addition of lateral gunnery. The battery has the distinction of being the oldest fortification in South Africa which is still armed.

6 Welcome Glen Farmhouse
In 1810, the farm 'Elsie's River' was granted to Christoph Brand. Within 2 years, he had built this 19th-century Cape Dutch style farmhouse. The house gained national monument status in 1968. Military artefacts, mosaic-earring, long waxes, perfume bottles, hundreds of airlock tags, antique trunks and powder containers – you name it and the Glen of Antiquity – Junk and Disorderly, a private museum in Glencairn, has it all! Information: call Admiral Söderlund on 021 786 2383 or email agals5@afrika.com. Visits by appointment only. Price: Donations go to the South African Bore Marrow Registry.

7 Emily Roose Grave
Without fanfare, Emily Roose, the nanny of Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth's husband, died at Simon's Town and is buried in the Dido Valley Cemetery. Besides having been a loyal and loving nanny to Philip through his younger years, she had also delivered Prince Philip on a dining room table back in Greece in 1921. Her grave was paid for by the Greek Royal Family.

8 Harbour Bay Mall
The first shopping mall in Simon's Town was opened in 2018. The 14 800m² mixed use development includes a shopping mall with mixed residential living, a private same-day surgical facility, a boutique-style fully equipped gym with various studios classes offering short and long-term contracts and retail. It was built on the site of the old Marine Oil Refinery in Dido Valley which was demolished in 2005.

9 SS Clan Stuart
On 21 November 1914 the SS Clan Stuart, a 3,500 ton British turret steamer, carrying a cargo of coal, ran aground after dragging its anchor in a south easterly gale off Mackerel Beach. Several efforts were made to refloat the ship over a period of 4 months but without success. The ship's engine block still breaks the surface. The wreck now sits at a depth of 7m to 8m and has become a favourite for training diving and night dives.

10 Scratch Patch
Gemstones for Africa! Lie down in a carpet of gem stones, and buy the ones you choose – this is a treasure trove for kids and a lot of fun. For the adults, many different gemstone products are for sale. The stones are tumble polished on site in the world's largest gemstone factory that processes some 150 varieties of stones from all around the world.

11 Klein Vishoek
In 1699, Andries Aabertus Bruyn applied for this piece of land next to the Lower North Battery for his fishing business. Lord Charles Somerset granted his request in 1823 and Bruyn's family ran a successful fishing business until the end of the 19th century. Thereafter, the house was bought by Dirk van Breda and then occupied by local fishing families until 1950. It was subsequently owned by Marine Oil Refineries, a Dr Oberholzer (1962), the Chaplin family and, finally, became S.A. Navy property in 1985.

12 Lower North Battery
This battery sits on the original site of the Zoutman Battery, built in 1793 under the VOC. Two years later the Dutch abandoned the battery after spiking their guns before the Battle of Muizenberg. The British took control of the battery and renamed it the North Battery. Upgrades to the battery started in 1806 and then in Sheerness, England until 1885. It was lastly mounted in 1881 and the battery became the Gunner's School's firing range which saw the addition of lateral gunnery. The battery has the distinction of being the oldest fortification in South Africa which is still armed.

13 Middle North Battery
A 9 inch gun rifled muzzle loading gun, known as "Betty", was designed in 1865 as a broadside gun for ironclad ships and harbour defence. Only 190 were made. The gun was last fired in 1930. This gun was first mounted in Halifax, Nova Scotia until 1878, then in Bermuda until 1881 and then in Sheerness, England until 1885. It was lastly mounted in 1881 and the battery became the Gunner's School's firing range which saw the addition of lateral gunnery. The battery has the distinction of being the oldest fortification in South Africa which is still armed.

14 Scala Battery
This 21 inch gun rifled muzzle loading gun, known as "Betty", was designed in 1865 as a broadside gun for ironclad ships and harbour defence. Only 190 were made. The gun was last fired in 1930. This gun was first mounted in Halifax, Nova Scotia until 1878, then in Bermuda until 1881 and then in Sheerness, England until 1885. It was lastly mounted in 1881 and the battery became the Gunner's School's firing range which saw the addition of lateral gunnery. The battery has the distinction of being the oldest fortification in South Africa which is still armed.

15 Red Hill Pass
This pass is 7.6 km long with over 30 bends, corners and curves with spectacular views all the way to the top. The old track up the hill, from the 1800s, is one of the oldest passes on the Cape Peninsula and, for many years, was the only route to Cape Point and the southern reaches of the Peninsula. The older track was upgraded including a re-route towards the Scala Battery in 1932.

16 Redhill Village Ruins
Redhill was once a village, home to more than 70 predominantly mixed race families. Today, these homes lie in ruins. One reason is that families removed doors and windows when they left to start an unwanted new life in Ocean View and on the Cape Flats. They were forcefully removed between 1965 and 1970 by the Apartheid government under the Group Areas Act, but, in this case, an excuse of a new dam to be built was the purported reason. The dam never materialized. In 1989, previous residents were paid R14,000,000 in compensation for their suffering. Today this area is managed by SANRA Parks.

17 Redhill Village Ruins
This earth wall dam was built in 1964-67 to supply water to Simon's Town. The wall was extended in 1970 with a present capacity of 1,300 Ml. It was built on the eastern side of the Kleinplaas farm, hence the name, 'small farm dam'. This is the main source of water to Simon's Town until the early 1980s when the town was connected to Cape Town's major water sources. Today, this is a well known hiking area with a relatively flat network of trails. Starting in the 1990s, this area has become one of the premier birding (climbing) sites on the Cape Peninsula.

18 Roman Rock Lighthouse
This cast iron lighthouse, the fifth oldest in South Africa, was built between 1857-1867 and was the only lighthouse on the South African coast to be built on an offshore single rock (which is still the case today). Granite blocks were cut from the rock on Seaforth Beach which were used to stabilise the expanding concrete base section which had destabilised the whole structure. The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1992.

19 Simon's Town Railway Station
This station was built before the railway line reached Simon's Town and was opened by the Premier of the Cape at the time, Cecil John Rhodes, who rode in the first train which arrived in a bunting-bedecked Simon's Town. There was a parade, free train rides for the children and a grand luncheon at the British Hotel for all the dignitaries. The final extension of the railway line from Kalk Bay to Simon's Town started in 1889 and was completed and opened on 1 December 1900. The line is electrified with overhead catenary in 1928.

20 Long Beach
Long Beach is popular with kayakers, photographers and scuba divers. It is right next to the Simon's Town railway station and has ample parking available. It is perfect for beginner divers and a variety of fish not commonly found in the region have been sighted here. It may occasionally be closed for diving when foreign warships are in Simon's Town.

21 Admiralty House
This site was first built on by Antoni Visser in 1740. He was a former Dutch soldier who became the unofficial representative of the VOC at Simon's Town. By 1760, the rough layout of Admiralty House was in place, making it one of the oldest buildings in Simon's Town. Alterations occurred in 1853 and 1875. It was the residence of the Royal Navy's Simon's Town Commander-in-Chief from 1814 to 1959. Famous people who have stayed at or visited Admiralty House are HM King George VI, Prince Alfred, second son of Queen Victoria, Louis Napoleon, Prince Imperial of France, Rudyard Kipling, David Livingston and Robert Scott from the ill-fated expedition to the South Pole.

22 Studlands The Wine-House
This 'Wijn Huys', was built on the edge of Simon's Town in 1797 by J. Eksteen as Admiral Epinhotz. In 1795, noticed the existing liquor outlet was not to the main navy party and many summer coming ashore never made it beyond this point. Studlands was declared a national monument in 1965 but now has been reclassified as a provincial monument. It is likely the oldest existing Wine-House still standing in South Africa today.

23 St Francis of Assisi Parish Church
In 1827, this church which had a rocky start as a result of the original church building collapsing in 1824 due to flooding opened its doors. The church is named after Lady Frances, Cole Ignovien's wife of the Cape Colony for her commitment and fundraising. It suffered another setback, losing 70% of their congregation because of the forced removal policy of the government.

24 The Residency Simon's Town
This museum was established in 1977 to showcase the local history and events that have shaped Simon's Town from 1000 years ago, through the Colonial period until recent times. The building that houses the museum, the Residency was built in 1777 as the winter residence for the Dutch East India Company governor at the Cape.

25 SA Navy Museum
This interesting museum is full of naval artefacts and exhibits that tell the story of the South African Navy, from vintage navigational and divers' equipment, model ships and submarines, uniforms and medals to weaponry. The museum is housed in the historical Modder Magazine and Storehouse of the 1743 which was enlarged in 1810 to become the three-storey building we see today.

26 Admiral's Kloof
Originally named Baarans Kloof, this gorge above Simon's Town is one of the best short walks on the Cape Peninsula: 15 to 20 minutes of easy walking will get you from year to year to the end of the kloof. The highlights are spectacular views, two waterfalls, a dam from pre-1900 and one of the best examples of a 200-300 million year-old thrust fault (seen across the valley on the opposite rock face).

27 Signal School Steps
Starting in Baard Street, you will find one of the longest well-constructed staircases in South Africa, more than made up for with breathtaking views of built to service the Signal School above on the Klawer Valley plateau. Estimated to have 340 steps with angled ramp walkways, this is a fitting hill walk with the reward of visiting Just Nuisance's grave at the top.

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29 St George's Street
This part of the road through Simon's Town was referred to as the Main Street until 1899 when the Simon's Town historical names and sign plates to all the streets of the town. The street was named after the first Anglican Church in South Africa which was in Simon's Town. Today, this street is home to many remarkable buildings and is one of the few remaining streets in South Africa showcasing a bygone era. Other important historical locations on this street are Jubilee Square, the Western Dockyard gates and the old jetty.

30 Wall of Memory
This project by the Simon's Town Historical Society was installed on St George's Street to celebrate and commemorate Simon's Town's rich history and culture. It focuses on the naval presence, fishing industry, the Group Areas Act, including forced removals of non-whites and the Muslim community.

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32 Simon's Town Jetty
In 1886, the first public jetty in Simon's Town was constructed using light timber. In 1905 this was replaced using heavier grange timber and, in 1921, reinforced concrete was used as a replacement. This jetty is one of the oldest structures of its type still in use today.

33 Jubilee Square
Before 1880, this square was known as Market Square. The square was renamed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of George VI in 1935. Just Nuisance was immortalized in bronze by Alan Doyle in 1985 and the statue was erected on Jubilee Square as part of a major restoration project that took place a year later.

34 Warrior Toy Museum
This is one of those stunning little beaches surrounded by large granite boulders creating a calm pool for swimming and nooks and crannies for exploring. This is a very safe beach for families, although, in 1901, the first recorded shark attack in South Africa took place here when a Boer POW was attacked while bathing. (The golf course above this beach was a POW camp to yourself. There is excellent swimming and diving.)

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36 Amlay House
This small museum in the Amlay's house, built in 1858, is a window into the rich Malmesbury culture that existed in Simon's Town from the Dutch East India Company period until the forced removals of more than 7000 people under the Group Areas Act in 1967. This is very much a human collection of buses, airplanes, trucks and load soldiers.

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38 Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church
Two Spanish brothers, the DeLacunas from South America, married an Irish and a German woman respectively. Their descendants were so numerous that they formed the basis of the congregation. This church is named after Simon the 'Casanvier' in the Gospels. The foundation stone of this church was laid in 1885.

39 Selborne Graving Dock
This unique Corsican circular design dock was adopted by the British and used for the Napoleonic Wars. Three were constructed in South Africa. The Simon's Town Martello Tower was built under the command of Major General James Craig in 1796 and the dock was opened in 1910. The Dockyard was handed over to South Africa in 1957 as part of the Simon's Town Agreement.

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41 Martello Tower
This is one of the most stunning little beaches examples of a 130-million-year-old dolerite dyke (like volcanic rock) that has intruded into the much older (540 million years) granite. Just next to this, on the same side of the road, you will notice what seems like a low wall running across the rocks: this is another intrusion but, this time, made up of a slightly younger granite that pushed up through cracks. These low walls or ridges are known as Apltes.

42 Simon's Town Harbour
Fisherman's Beach is a rocky bay situated on Main Road. This pretty little cove, with its turquoise crystal clear water, is a safe and popular spot for swimming and diving. There is a grassy verge, perfect for sunbathing and picnicking. Limited parking keeps the crowds away and a quiet day can be enjoyed by both locals and tourists.

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44 Seaforth Beach
This beach is the free version of Boulders beach and now it seems as if it also has some resident penguins. The beach is 600 m wide, flanked by granite boulders with grass lawns which makes it a perfect family beach. Back in the early 1800s, this place would not have been a beach. It was a rocky shore. It was the first whaling station in South Africa under the British occupation. Its smelly boiling blubber was its downfall and the operation was moved to Kalk Bay.

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46 Water's Edge Beach
Water's Edge Beach is thought of as local secret. It's tucked away between Seaforth and Boulders beaches. It is a wonderful place for children, particularly due to the rock pools, and is also ideal for swimming and sunbathing. Behind the beach is a beautiful Victorian style cottage which was designed by Sir Herbert Baker in 1903.

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48 Windmill Beach
Simon's Town Visitor Information Centre
This hike to the top of Swartkop Peak at 678 m, is one of the best hikes in the Cape Peninsula with 300 degree breathtaking views over False Bay. The hike starts on the western corner of Jan Smuts Drive in Seaforth and is roughly 12km in total and is technically quite easy.

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