

# About Table Mountain Cape Town



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## Table Mountain Cape Town is probably the most well known tourist attraction in South Africa

You can experience Table Mountain in the company of  
an enthusiastic guide on an organised Guided Tour  
[Cape Town Tour](#)

### Getting there:

Bus from Cape Town station, taxi and car - parking is available near the lower cable station along Tafelberg road.

[Table Mountain](#) is timeless - in terms of the multifaceted human history of Cape Town and South Africa - and in all human memory. [Cape Town History](#)

The familiar form of our unique flat topped mountain has always been there. In fact millions of years before the early days when the original inhabitants of the Cape the indigenous Khoi San roamed the coastal plains. [Cape Town History](#)

[Table Mountain](#) sheltered the original Cape explorers in the 16th century, the first European settlers and the many following generations of slaves, immigrants and travellers who helped to build and develop our special city.

The extraordinary appeal of Cape Town's famous natural attraction is known and appreciated in South Africa and around the world. It is a regular feature on postcards and has been captured in its varied moods, in numerous images and films.

Our impression of Table Mountain from the city bowl and beyond from Blouberg beach, is almost misleading. We are confronted with the image of a solid flat topped behemoth, often draped in swirling cloud, trapped between its two attendants - Devil's Peak and Lion's Head.

Driving towards the city from [Cape Town airport](#) you get a different impression as you are confronted with Devil's Peak and the rugged Eastern buttresses of the Table Mountain range stretching towards [Kirstenbosch Gardens](#) and the coastal towns of Muizenberg and FishHoek.

Head up Kloof Nek road towards the cable station and over the hill down towards [Camps Bay](#), and you'll see the Twelve Apostles mountain peaks flanking the winding road to [Hout Bay](#).

Table Mountain in fact stands at the head of a chain of mountains extending South along the backbone of the Cape Peninsula towards Cape Point. It is the direction from whence the well known Cape south easterly wind originates, from faraway over the Atlantic Ocean, and it is the region now known as the [Table Mountain National Park](#)

#### Origins:

The Table Mountain range originated some 500 million years ago when Africa was part of the original Gondwanaland continent. The Earth was in a turmoil of earth quakes and volcanic activity. The gigantic tectonic plates within the mantle, many kilometres below the surface of the seas, shifted and molten lava was forced upwards through seabed shale to cool and form granite.

The quartzite/sandstone mountains we know today developed from sediment deposited by rivers, which covered the subsiding granite over millions of years. Rocky remnants of those ancient times can still be seen in the form of huge granite boulders which dot our coastline and flank many Cape beaches.

Today, Table Mountain is a magnet for photographers, tourists and hikers, and a visit to Cape Town is not complete without a cable car ride or hike to the summit. The upper cable station is at 1067 metres and the highest point Maclears Beacon stands at 1085 metres.

About the Table Mountain cableway: A funicular railway to the summit was originally proposed before the 1st world war, but after much deliberation a cableway system was eventually financed by a group of prominent businessmen and opened in 1929.

The cableway was upgraded in 1997 to the highest safety standards and two large revolving cars now transport passengers up and down the mountain simultaneously while offering a panoramic view in all directions.

At peak times during the summer months long queues snake back from the lower cable station. Cable way tickets cannot be prebooked so arrive early to avoid a long wait.

[Parking](#) is provided along Tafelberg road. Self employed parking marshalls wearing printed bibs watch the cars while you ascend the mountain - in return for a few coins. It is also advisable to arrive early to obtain parking nearby at

busy times, otherwise expect to walk some distance along the road.

People with disabilities are provided with dedicated parking bays at the lower cable station. The cablecars, facilities and pathways on the summit are wheel chair friendly.

The cableway usually runs continuously late into the evening in peak season Nov-Feb unless strong winds or poor visibility prohibit its use. When it is time for the last cable car to descend the mountain, a loud hooter sounds in advance to warn stragglers. In the event of adverse weather, leave yourself with enough time to walk down should the cableway be forced to close. [Table Mountain Cable Way](#)

The facilities on the summit of Table Mountain in the vicinity of the upper cable station have also been upgraded to make them more tourist friendly - unfortunately to the extent where concrete modifications are clearly visible from below.

Boardwalks lead to lookout points and telescopes, paths have been laid and signposting indicates points of interest. There is a self service restaurant and a cocktail bar, and a souvenir shop.

If you intend to ascend by means of the cable car remember that the temperature is generally cooler on top, and prone to change depending on the season, so bring a coat or windbreaker along. When you reach the summit don't wander too far from the cable station unless you have a good knowledge of the area, or unless you are accompanied by an experienced hiker. There are sheer dangerous cliffs nearby.

#### **For Hikers:**

Signposting on the various paths are minimal so if you don't know the mountain it is advisable to hike with someone who does. Alternatively, walking maps are available in stationary stores and at the lower cable station. There are many routes on Table Mountain which vary in levels of difficulty and exposure. If you're not sure of your route or do not know the mountain, then rather not attempt the hike.

The most obvious and direct route up to the Table ascends via Platteklip Gorge on the north face of the mountain. This route is accessible via Tafelberg road from the lower cable station and signposted. Walking time up is 1-3 hours depending on your pace and level of fitness.

Routes to the summit are to be found all around the Table Mountain range, some more difficult and strenuous than others. One of the easier hikes up to the cable station is along the jeep track from Constantia Nek via the Back

Table and the dams, but it's a longish one.

Whichever route you decide to take, make sure you are prepared and know where you are going. A hike up Table Mountain especially in hot weather should not be taken lightly. Give yourself plenty of time. Leave early and don't walk alone. Carry a cell phone if possible, a route map warm clothing, sufficient water and food, use sunblock and wear a hat. All members of your party should be equally fit to avoid stragglers.

The 3 day portered [Hoerikwaggo Table Mountain Trail](#) is a recent initiative by SANPARKS. It is for you if you want an all round guided hiking and cultural experience plus comfortable accommodation. Starting at the [Cape Town Waterfront](#) the trail wends its way through the city, via various points of interest, to the top of the Mountain. More information - [SANParks](#)

#### For Cavers:

There are a number of sandstone/quartzite cave systems on the Back Table of Table Mountain. They have been formed by earth movement and water action. Most have been explored and mapped by members of the South African Spelaeological Association (SASA) The larger and deeper systems such as Wynberg cave and Bats cave are difficult to find unless you know the area. They are extensive and dangerous and should not be accessed without the assistance of experienced cavers. More caving information on my [Caving in Cape Town](#) page.

#### Mountain Rescue:

Tourists and hikers have to be rescued in the Cape mountains for various reasons, ranging from losing their way, to injury or illness. Occasionally some have also died. This has brought about the need for a rescue organisation with search and recovery resources which extend across the Western Cape.

A joint initiative by local government and Cape Metro Services has brought various outdoor clubs and groups together under one umbrella known as Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR) Members of these groups are trained in emergency rescue techniques such as helicopter crewing, rigging, patient handling, radio communications etc. in various outdoor environments ranging from mountains to caves.

Members of WSAR work together to form an efficient and essential mountain rescue organisation. [WSAR](#)

## About the author

My home town is Cape Town. In fact I've been a resident here for many years. The cultural history of our indigenous people I find fascinating and I enjoy the laid back lifestyle and the beauty of the natural surroundings which are unique to this region at the southern end of the African continent. The Cape is certainly a region of contrasts and Cape Town has a lot to offer it's visitors. It was for this reason that I decided to set up my [Cape Town Travel Adviser](#) website, specifically to provide the local information that potential visitors to the Cape would be looking for.

I wanted to build a popular travel site, one which would not only be of use to Cape Town travellers but a business site which would attract plenty of web traffic, achieve top rankings in the popular search engines and generate a profitable income on the side.

Well, I made it - at minimal cost - and my website is listed by Alexa in the top 1% of all sites on the 'net. No easy task if you don't know how. For me it has been a combination of hard work and use of the best tools in the business.

I have a passion for Cape Town and my website reflects my personal interests and knowledge to my readers. You may also have an interest or passion you would like to put across in the form of a simple yet profitable website. After all, why build just a Web site... when you could build a Web business?

For more information on exactly how to go about it [click here](#)

*Ed Berry*

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