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AFRICA | ASIA | SOUTH AMERICA | PACIFIC



TOURING THE GARDEN ROUTE



CLASSIC GARDEN ROUTE TOURS

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SOUTH AFRICA'S GARDEN ROUTE

The Garden Route runs along one of the most beautiful stretches of South Africa's southern shores and has been described as heaven on earth – a visual gem with exquisite African scenery and untamed coastline.

Three hours from Cape Town, the Garden Route weaves its way from Mossel Bay to Storms River along craggy cliffs, through quaint towns and past secluded bays, with breathtaking scenery at every turn.

Often taken as a foodie tour, this stretch of coast is renowned for Knysna's superb oysters, with towns offering a wealth of culinary opportunities.

The Garden Route offers far more than tasty treats, and several national parks, cultural townships, stunning waterfalls and the mighty Indian Ocean provide intrigue, adventure and activities throughout this stunning journey.

QUICK FACTS:

- The Garden Route stretches for 190 miles (300km) along South Africa's southerly coast
- The small town of Knysna is globally renowned for the quality of its oyster crops
- A superb birding location, over 300 bird species exist along the route
- It isn't only birdlife that can be spotted; bushbuck, blue duiker, baboon, vervet monkeys, reedbuck, leopard & caracal can also be found here
- The best time to visit the Garden Route is between October and March
- With 45,000 different plant species present - of which over 69% are endemic to this region - the Garden Route is a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve

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CLASSIC OUDTSHOORN — TOURS —

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OSTRICH FARM TOUR

Ostriches are the biggest birds in the world. In Oudtshoorn you can enjoy a hands-on experience with these fantastic birds when you visit one of several local farms. These tours will allow you to come into direct contact with the ostriches and you may even have the opportunity to interact with them. Though raised for their meat and leather, the ostriches are well cared-for, free to roam on large estates and interact as they please. Visits comprise walking tours and activities, with some farms offering tractor tours and restaurants at which you can sample the lean, rich ostrich meat.

CANGO CAVES TOURS

The Cango Caves are situated in the heart of the Little Karoo. About 10,000 years ago, the Khoisan used the entrance area of the cave as shelter. The Cango Caves are unofficially heralded locally as the 8th wonder of the world. There are several types of dripstone; stalagmites (which grow upward from the cave floor), stalactites (hanging columns from the ceiling) and helictites (needle-like features which grow in all directions). The caves have been illuminated with electric lights since 1929 making it easy to negotiate uneven pathways and stairs to explore the numerous chambers. The easier 60-minute Heritage Tour is suitable for all abilities, but for a little more excitement, the 90-minute Adventure Tour begins in the more accessible halls before plunging into crawl tunnels for some authentic spelunking.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ostrich are the tallest & heaviest living birds, standing as much as nine feet (2.7m) tall & weighing up to 350 pounds (159kg)
- Ostrich has as much protein as chicken & beef but only a third of the fat of chicken and 80% less fat than beef
- Tours incorporate the wonders of the caves & informative talks on their history & cultural significance
- The caves maintain a consistent 60°F (20°C). Sensible footwear & light clothing is recommended for both tours
- Note: The Adventure Tour can be somewhat challenging & is suited to more lean, able-bodied participants

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CLASSIC KNYSNA TOURS

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GARDEN OF EDEN TOUR

The Garden of Eden is an enchanting wet forest near Knysna on the Garden Route. This is one of the most lush and beautiful parts of the Knysna forest and a recommended stop when visiting this gorgeous region. Along with innumerable bird species, here you can also occasionally find rare and endemic forest elephants.

CATAMARAN TOUR

The Knysna waterfront is alive with water activity, including a host of boats, catamarans, paddle cruisers, yachts and even a floating restaurant, which make up the famous Knysna Ferries. These vessels are the only boats able to navigate upstream. A catamaran tour takes you out onto the Indian ocean with the possibility of spotting dolphins and migratory humpback and southern right whales.

OYSTER TASTING

The gorgeous coastal town of Knysna is known for its many oyster farms. There are various activities that focus on oysters, such as oyster tastings, oyster barbecues and even oyster-eating competitions, as well as numerous restaurants serving fresh and prepared oyster dishes.

FEATHERBED NATURE RESERVE

One of South Africa's Natural Heritage sites, this beautiful 370-acre (150ha) private nature reserve includes the western head of the renowned Knysna Heads - two huge sandstone cliffs that mark the entrance of the Knysna River. You can take a luxury cruise on one of the pleasure boats around the nature reserve and to the heads to see the whole area from a unique viewpoint. Full bar facilities and a variety of snacks or meal options are available on most of the boats. The more adventurous visitor can enjoy an exciting canoe trip across Knysna Lagoon to the nature reserve where you can take a pleasant stroll and observe Cape bushbuck, blue duiker, African clawless otter, and many smaller mammals.

KNYSNA LAGOON TOUR

There's a wealth of fun to be had on the Knysna Lagoon. From sailing, wakeboarding and water skiing to old-fashioned therapeutic fishing, the lagoon is also great for swimming and taking rides on floating restaurants and speedboats. If you prefer to sit back and watch, the waterfront is famous for its seafood delicacies and its relaxed nature.

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CLASSIC — TSITSIKAMMA & — PLETTENBERG BAY

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TSITSIKAMMA FOREST TOUR

The Tsitsikamma Forest Area - which the ancient San people who once inhabited the region called the “place of sparkling water” - is a region of startling beauty along the southern coastline. Tsitsikamma’s spectacular scenery includes 50 miles (80km) of rocky coastline with spectacular sea and landscapes. A remote mountainous region with secluded valleys covered in mountain fynbos and temperate high forests includes deep river gorges leading down to the sea.

Tsitsikamma National Park harbors a wonderful array of inter-tidal and marine life. This is one of the largest Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in the world, conserving 11 percent of South Africa’s temperate south coast rocky shoreline. One third of the park is covered in fynbos (Cape floral kingdom) scattered amongst the forest vegetation, boasting a wide variety of beautiful flowers including proteas and heather.

The high mountains, deep gorges and rugged coastline are swathed in the Cape’s unique fynbos. Beautiful indigenous forests are home to many ancient trees such as yellowwood, stinkwood, hard pear, ironwood and many more. In the ocean and landscapes, dolphin and clawless otter play, blue duiker graze and oyster catchers and the Knysna lourie swoop and soar.

You will enjoy lunch overlooking the ocean and river, after which you may wish to take a walk through the forest to the iconic suspension bridge over Storms River.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- More adventurous visitors can kayak, sail or snorkel in the ocean
- On land, bungee jumping & mountain biking will fulfill thrill-seekers
- During the migration season, southern right whales can be spotted in the ocean
- More than the forest alone, Tsitsikamma and Plettenberg Bay offer coastal views & a wonderful stop to cool off, refresh & unwind

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CLASSIC — TSITSIKAMMA & — PLETTENBERG BAY

MONKEYLAND

This world-class sanctuary provides the world's first free-roaming haven for numerous primate species. The freedom of these amazing animals adds to the excitement as visitors take a walk through the sanctuary, as the many monkeys are free to roam wherever they wish.

TREETOP CANOPY TOURS

This tour takes place in the magnificent Tsitsikamma forest approximately 45 minutes from Knysna, consisting of 10 platforms and 10 slides, the longest of which is 300 feet (91m). The Cape Treetop Canopy Tours are fun and adventurous, stemming from biologists who needed to find a way to access the plants found in the deepest and most mysterious parts of the forest. The biologists soon discovered the unbridled joy of sailing through the forest in this manner, and as a result, the canopy tours were established for the general public.

TSITSIKAMMA FALLS ZIPLINE TOUR

Zipline 165 feet (50m) above the majestic Kruis River. Eight spectacular lines, the longest being 700 feet (211m), zig-zag across a picturesque gorge with magnificent views.

BIRDS OF EDEN TOUR

Located on 5.7 acres (2.3ha), it is the largest single, free-flight aviary in the world. Enjoy being outdoors, feeding the ducks and walking behind a waterfall while viewing birds in their habitat or simply pack a picnic basket and enjoy a relaxing lunch while the birds fly above.

CULTURAL TOWNSHIP TOUR

Experience an African way of life by exploring the everyday life of a real African. This guided tour allows you to discover interesting facts about Xhosa history and tribal culture. Meet the local children at the crèche and be entertained by their beautiful voices in song, or see where locals buy their daily essentials, while learning about their lifestyle, including a tour through their homes.

BLOUKRANS RIVER BUNGEE JUMPING

The Bloukrans Bungee is the world's highest commercial bungee bridge and also the highest commercial natural bungee jump in the world. The bridge spans the Bloukrans River some 710 feet (216m) below. The bungee jump operates year-round during all weather conditions (except gale-force winds).

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