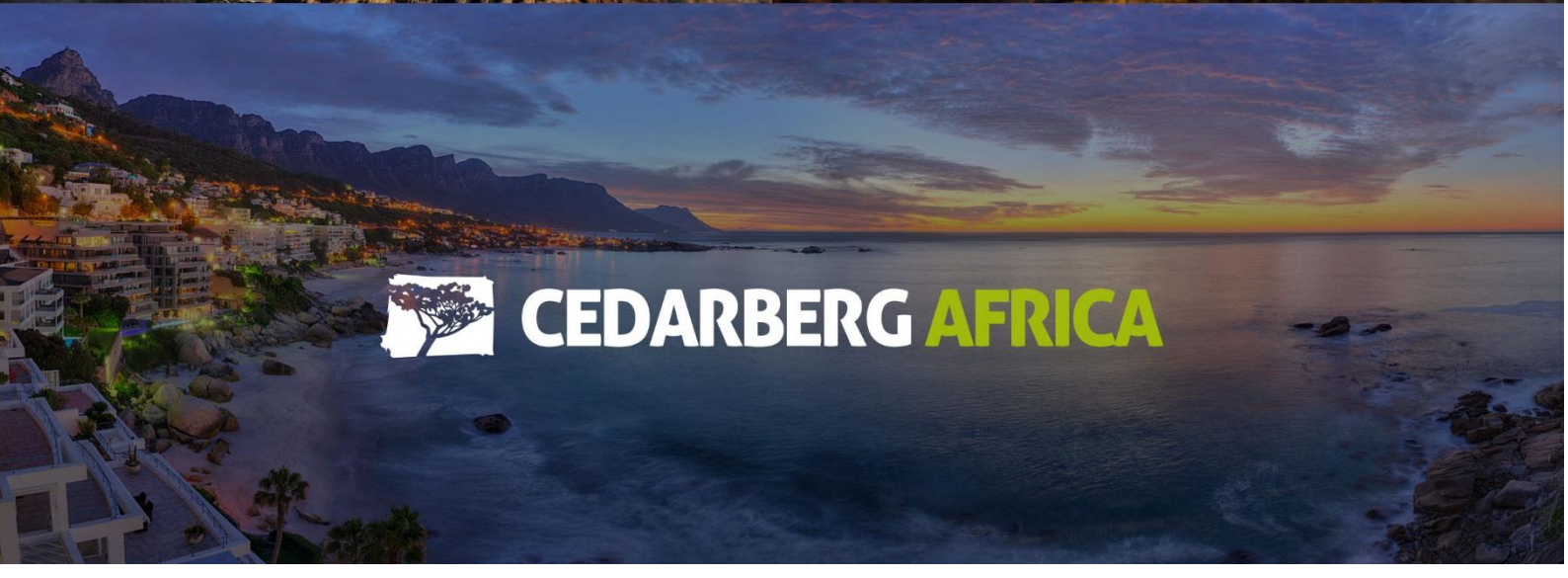


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CEDARBERG AFRICA



Top 25 Golf Courses in South Africa

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Top 25 Golf Courses in South Africa

We have used SA 100 Top Courses for our 2023 rankings.

Post Covid, we have seen that golf courses which are typically based around local club membership and local players have risen in the rankings. Whereas those courses which are based in tourism hot-spots have somewhat fallen off the pace. We suppose this is natural in an era when there was very little international tourism. So, we would expect this to change again in the coming years.

As in the past, Cedarberg Africa has not adhered strictly to the Top 100 rankings. And I'll explain why...

Not all of South Africa's top golf courses are in prime destinations which are of interest to the keen overseas golfer coming to South Africa. Johannesburg golf courses now dominate the Top 100. Some 35% are in or near Johannesburg. This is our largest city, but usually only visited by tourists for a one night stopover.

Thus, our Golf guide focuses on the best golf courses *that are easily accessible for the golfing visitor*. We have put the current 2023 Rankings at the bottom of each description for your reference. We've also given you some ideas for where to stay nearby. In many cases there is a hotel associated with each golf estate. In other cases, there's a range of options.

Planning your Golf Safari in South Africa

Use this guide as a helpful intro to the many courses available to you, then contact us to help you plan your golf safari. We are **specialists at tailor-made holidays & vacations in South Africa** and so we can put together an itinerary with as much golf as you wish and mix it up with a safari, time by the sea, Cape Town or Victoria Falls. The combinations are endless...

Alternatively, have a look at some of our sample golf itineraries in South Africa, to get an idea of how a trip would work. Some of these are self-drive examples, as many European clients like the flexibility of independent self-drive, especially in the Western Cape. Some are suggested as private tours. However, all can be done using private touring and transfers if you prefer.

Check out our golf pages [here](#)

- [Cape Golf Self-drive – 7 nights Self Drive](#)
- [Cape & Garden Route Golf – 9 nights Self Drive or Escorted](#)
- [Golf & Game Safari – 13 nights Escorted or Self Drive](#)
- [Sun City Golf tour – 3 nights](#)
- [Rovos Rail Golf Safari \(9 nights\)](#)
- [Rovos Rail African Collage Safari with Golf \(9 or 10 nights\)](#)



No 1 – Leopard Creek, Near Kruger

Consistently rated in the top 3 in South Africa, Leopard Creek is situated on the border of the world-famous Kruger National Park. It has re-opened after an extensive revamp which repositioned fairway bunkers and also redesigned the 12th hole. They have also worked with indigenous plants to encourage wildlife and support the local ecology.

Gary Player's design takes advantage of the natural environment, which is home to Africa's "Big Five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros and buffalo – and over 200 species of birds that make their homes in the surrounding trees, some of which are over 100 years old. Players are protected from the wildlife by means of innovative architectural and landscaping techniques – although water hazards might include the odd hippopotamus or crocodile!

Situated on the southern border of the Kruger National Park, the exclusive Leopard Creek presents a rare opportunity to play golf in the heart of the bushveld. Planned to be both a challenge for the best golfers and fun for the average player, this 18 hole golf course was meticulously laid out in 1995 by the owner, Johann Rupert, and Gary Player. The 360ha estate is bordered to the north by the picturesque Crocodile River and the Kruger National Park. Typical bushveld koppies overlook the course from the east, providing an ideal backdrop for this magnificent course.

The par 5 signature hole at Leopard Creek is not particularly long at 475m but the island green presents a tricky shot over water. The 13th hole is equally dramatic, with the green seemingly floating above the Crocodile River which is the border with the Kruger Park. Indeed golf hazards take on a new dimension at Leopard Creek for the water is home to hippos and of course crocodiles.

Signature Hole: 13th - par 5 - 505m

Here the green is right on the edge of the Crocodile River but 32 metres above the water level offering magnificent views up the river and into the Kruger Park.

Kruger Border • Parkland • 6 665m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 1

Options to Stay – Buhala Lodge

Getting to play at Leopard Creek is not all plain sailing. You need to stay at one of a select band of nearby country house hotels and five star game lodges and hotels, both within the Kruger National Park and the Sabi Sands.

However for sheer ease of access and charm, we recommend [Buhala Game Lodge](#) only 10km away also on the banks of the Crocodile River, the southern border of the Kruger National Park.



No 2 – The Links at Fancourt, George, Garden Route

The Links course at Fancourt, which hosted the President's Cup, is a truly unique and challenging course, especially if the wind blows, with rolling fairways alongside punishing roughs. It is considered by many to be the most impressively designed course in South Africa. Each hole received detailed attention to ensure the balance of length, shot values and position of hazards. It is currently ranked number 2 in South Africa.

Gary Player's design was a marvel of construction to piece together, with over 700 000sqm of earth moved to create a links-style course on what had been essentially a flat piece of land. Unique to South Africa, the course presents undulating windswept terrain and dune-style landscape. As a result, the Links presents a stern test in all weather conditions. One of the most eye-catching hole is the par-three 2nd hole, with a bunker in the heart of the massive green! The Links offers some extraordinary holes which will test even the best golfer in every way. Not for the faint-hearted!

Apart from its distinctive design, The Links has been lauded for its vital role in environmental sustainability.

Signature hole: 15th - par 4 - 436m

With a dogleg to the left, the sensible play is at the direction marker with a wood from the tee, but hugging the left and flirting with the water will leave a shorter approach.

George, Garden Route • Links • 6 930m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 2





Options to Stay – Fancourt Hotel or The Manor at Fancourt

There's **only one option on offer**. (You cannot play at Fancourt Links unless you stay at Fancourt). However here at least you have the choice between the larger golf-orientated [Fancourt Country Estate Hotel](#) or the more exclusive boutique [Fancourt Manor House](#), This is a sort of hotel within a hotel, which has access to all the facilities of the larger hotel including its glorious Spa and the three golf courses, the Links, the Outeniqua and the Montagu.



Spa at Fancourt Country Club



One Bedroom Suite at Fancourt



No 3 – Pearl Valley, Cape Winelands

Pearl Valley is one of Jack Nicklaus's most visually pleasing golf courses. This golf legend sees the Pearl Valley course as the sum of his knowledge and his experience. It's risen dramatically in one of the Rankings, less so in the other...

The 500 acre Pearl Valley Golf Estate is surrounded by the Simonsberg and Drakenstein Mountains and bordered by vineyards with the Berg River acting as a water hazard through the course. Nicklaus has worked closely with nature to offer an aesthetic beauty. The combination of the intense colours of the greens and fairways together with the brilliant white river sand lining, the bunkers were carefully planned, making Pearl Valley one of the most spectacular golf courses in South Africa.

Every hole is played against the spectacular backdrop of the mountains surrounding the estate and all are challenging due to the bunkers and fast greens. This fairly flat open terrain enabled Nicklaus the freedom to consider the prevailing winds. Many of the holes are played in different directions, ensuring that the same conditions are not experienced too many times in one round. In its engineering and planning detail, Pearl Valley is very rare – traversed by roads in only three places and with a drainage system that allows play to continue just minutes after severe rain.

Between Paarl & Franschhoek, Cape Winelands • Parkland 6 719m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 3

Options to Stay – Pearl Valley Hotel or in Franschhoek area

Pearl Valley now has its own rather good estate hotel (4/±5 star).

However, Pearl Valley is fairly centrally-located in the Winelands so that you could stay at any number of hotels in **the Franschhoek** area. We particularly love [Babylonstoren Estate](#) set on its own wine and fruit farm with a beautiful Provençal style garden, estate to explore, wine cellar and restaurant.



Babylonstoren Cottage



Babylonstoren, part of old Homestead



No 4 – St Francis Links, Eastern Cape

The new St Francis Links course is not considered a true links course by all, given its rather disconcerting use of a number of water features. But it has risen in both rankings nevertheless. And a natural course between the beach and arable land it most certainly is. Jack Nicklaus has designed a course that will challenge all who play it and reward those who respect it. The layout combines every element of shot making with its undulating terrain, greens and surrounds as well as its variation in length and direction.

The shape of the greens comes from the natural movement of the land. The greens have simply been placed on top of the sand, changing shape in construction as the wind changed its mind. Some are more undulating than others. All putting surfaces and green surrounds present a mental and physical test.

St Francis Bay • Links 6 828m • Carts available • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 4



Options to Stay – The Sands@St Francis

We recommend the Sands@St Francis as a great place to stay when playing this course. It's right on the beach with a lovely sea view restaurant and a relaxed yet luxurious beachside ambience.



No 5 – Fancourt Montagu Course, Garden Route

The **Montagu course at Fancourt** has consistently been rated within the top 10 courses in South Africa. The Fancourt Montagu is considered one of the best conditioned golf courses in South Africa with a glorious parkland layout covering large tracts of varying terrain on rolling land. Mature trees, flowerbeds, shrubs and water hazards provide a colourful contrast. It is cleverly designed, picturesque and presents a challenge to golfers of all levels, taking in a setting of mountains, water and wildlife. This superbly manicured course has been updated with several holes being redesigned and two completely new holes ensuring that it can hold its head up with the new golf pretenders.

As with the other Fancourt courses, play is restricted to members, their guests and hotel guests, so there is ample time to savour the Fancourt golfing experience. The warm-up area, featuring a full-length range and a chipping and bunker practice area, is available to all golfers before play.

Signature hole: 17th - par 3 - 190m

This is scary for the average golfer with its long carry over water but the green is large and receptive so ignore it and go for the flag. If conservative, favour the left side of the green.

Note: George Country Club has risen in the ranks in recent years as well and now ranks No 18 in South Africa.

George, Garden Route • Parkland • 6 714m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 5



Options to Stay – Fancourt Hotel or The Manor at Fancourt (above)



No 6 – Arabella Country Club, Near Hermanus

The Arabella Country Club near Hermanus overlooks the Kogelberg Nature Reserve, a mass of over 1,200 species of wild flowers and fynbos. The sweeping grandeur of the mountains and lagoon backdrop complements this 18-hole championship course, designed by the exemplary golf architect Peter Malkovich.

Bordering the largest natural lagoon in South Africa, the Bot River Lagoon, with the 9th, 17th, and 18th holes running parallel to the water, Arabella Country Club provides both a wonderful golf challenge and an eye-catching landscape. The wetland is home to thousands of water birds so keep your eyes peeled for the flamingos.

This classic parkland course made a strong impact when Golf Digest named it the best new course in South Africa, and it has kept up the high standard it set early on, featuring regularly as one of South Africa's top-10 courses. A round of golf here certainly ranks with the best golf experiences in the world.

The Arabella Country Club has been the annual home to the Nelson Mandela Invitational charity golf tournament, hosting the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Samuel L Jackson, Ronan Keating, Ernie Els, Retief Goosen, Tim Clark, and Lee Westwood, helping to raise funds.

Note: Nearby **Hermanus Golf Club** is also well-regarded, coming in at **Number 39**.

Near Hermanus • Parkland 6 381m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 7





Options to Stay – Arabella Hotel

Given its location approx. 15km from Hermanus, it is best to stay at the [Arabella Hotel & Spa](#) with its beautiful views over the Bot lagoon. However, if you want to combine golf with a spot of whale-watching in Walker Bay, we also recommend either [Birkenhead House](#) or [Mosselberg on Grotto](#).



Arabella Hotel, Bedroom



Birkenhead House, Hermanus



No 7 – Humewood, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape

Humewood has been steadily moving up the ranks, being outside the top 10 five years ago and Number 7 in 2016. Situated on the sand dunes on the shores of Algoa Bay, this true links course is characterised by thick coastal bush, swales, humps and hollows. However, Humewood broke away from the traditional links design of 9 holes out and 9 holes back and instead, each of the 9 holes returns to the Clubhouse. The fairways are exposed, undulating and wide to compensate for strong winds. But the rough that borders them is unforgiving. The holes are simple, the gulf greens are fast and firm, the few bunkers are well positioned with tough, steep faces and there are no water hazards.

This course was the only African links course to make the cut into the **True Links** book by Peper and Campbell in 2010.

Signature hole: 13th - par 4 - 408m

This hole runs uphill along a severely sloped fairway with a tough semi-blind approach to a tiny green hidden behind a mound with rough to the right, a bunker to the left and thick bush behind it.

Port Elizabeth • Links • 6 390m • Walking course • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 9

Options to Stay – No5 Art Hotel

There's a range of options to choose from in Port Elizabeth from the five star Boardwalk Hotel to boutique guest lodges. We like the ultra-stylish five star No 5 Art Hotel showcasing some of South Africa's finest modern artists.





No 8 – Royal Johannesburg & Kensington - East

This is one of the top two Johannesburg courses (see later for some of the other highly rated options). It has risen in the Top 100 charts after the extensive revamp at the start of 2018. Robbie Marshall worked with the Royal staff, installing new bunkers, pruning trees and also enhancing the overall presentation.

This traditional parkland course offers stunning vistas where mature trees abound. The club exudes class both on and off the course. The clubhouse is still a proper clubhouse and not a boutique hotel. The West course is also highly rated at No 33.

Johannesburg • Parklands 6 940m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 11

Note: The other top-ranked Johannesburg course is Glendower which is No 8. The Royal Johannesburg and Kensington West Course also comes in at a respectable No 33.

Options to Stay – The Residence

Being in Johannesburg, there's a wide array of boutique hotels to choose from. It just so happens that one of our favourite hotels is close to the Royal Johannesburg. [The Residence](#) is a small boutique hotel in the historic suburb of Houghton in northern Johannesburg. The hotel exudes an air of quiet, charming sophistication. The sumptuous lounge and sitting room invite relaxation throughout the seasons. Doors open onto the long, spacious veranda which offers a cool respite in the warm summer months. Take a stroll through the lush, terraced gardens, enjoy a game of tennis, or swim a few lengths in the pool.



No 9 – Gary Player Country Club, Sun City

The Gary Player Country Club at Sun City is probably South Africa's most famous golf course and with good reason. The course plays host to the annual Nedbank Golf Challenge. Past winners include Ray Floyd, Steve Ballesteros, Bernhard Langer, Ian Woosnam, Ernie Els and Nick Price.

It features two holes that have ranked in Golf Online's list of the 500 best holes in golf: the 9th and 18th holes. Golf Digest USA has ranked the course at number 29 in the world outside the US, and it is consistently ranked one of South Africa's top 10 courses.

But enough about its credentials. This course is one of the longest in South Africa at over 7000m and certainly one of the toughest, with the roughs being especially punishing. It places a premium on accurate approaches, with plenty of bunkers and water hazards to test even the best. Stray shots are likely to end up in the bushveld – not an easy place from which to play a recovery shot.

Although this tree-lined parkland course is fairly flat, the many water hazards, cunning-sited bunkers and hidden pin placement make up for the lack of gradient. However, it can be enjoyed by both social golfers and professionals alike.

Sun City, near Pilanesberg • Parkland 6 550m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 12

Options to Stay – Palace at the Lost City Hotel

The best option is the [Palace at the Lost City](#), the 5 star flagship hotel within the Sun City resort. However if you are looking for something a little more low-key, then the elegant four star Cascades Hotel could also fit the bill nicely. We offer 3 and 5 night golfing packages.



Aerial View of The Palace at the Lost City



'Roman Baths', Palace at the Lost City



No 10 – Pinnacle Point, Mossel Bay, Garden Route

This 18 hole championship golf course was designed by well-known South African golf course architect Peter Matkovich and opened in 2006. Pinnacle Point was selected as one of the Top Ten New Golf Courses of the World by Travel & Leisure in Jan 2007.

This Clifftop course, surrounded by fynbos vegetation, offers a challenging layout, dramatic views and breath-taking terrain. The 72 par layout is characterised by 7 majestic holes that line the Indian Ocean rock cliffs, four of which are played over ocean and cliff. All holes have been designed to fit the contours of the land.

It has also won the Complete Golfer 5 star Experience Award and offers 180 degree ocean views.

Garden Route • Parkland 6 465m • Caddies • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 15

Options to Stay – The View Hotel

Both Pinnacle Point and Oubaai (see number 25 below) have accommodation on site, but we recommend the five star [Views Hotel](#) or Simbavati Fynbos on Sea. They are further away but closer to the rest of the Garden Route and its real claim to fame are the magnificent views over Wilderness Beach right below the hotel – glorious for evening strolls at sunset after an enjoyable day of golf.



The Views Hotel, Wilderness



No 11 – Simola Golf Course, Knysna, Garden Route

A relatively new course which is fast rising up the rankings is **Simola Golf Course**, also in the Garden Route. This Jack Nicklaus course opened in 2005 and sits majestically on a wooden landscape overlooking the Knysna River and lagoon.

Untroubled by the wind that plagues so many coastal courses – and boasting an unusual configuration of five par-5s and five par-3s – Simola offers challenging and rewarding golf for pros and high-handicap players alike.

Garden Route • Parklands 6 401m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 16

Options to Stay – Kanonkop House or Villa Afrikana

There are some beautiful boutique options in Knysna. We recommend the hospitable [Kanonkop House](#), which also has Simola membership so that its guests get to play at reduced rates.

Another option is [Villa Afrikana](#) that offers glorious views from every bedroom over Knysna Lagoon and Knysna Heads. It is also perfect for keen golfers, with golfing long stay rates on offer.



Villa Afrikana



Kanonkop House



No 12 – Zimbali Country Club, KZN North Coast

The superb Tom Weiskopf course (former South Africa PGA and British Open Champion) descends from Zimbali Lodge down the valley to the Indian Ocean. This course is both challenging and beautiful, offering world-class conditions for top players and higher handicap players alike.

Zimbali has an abundance of natural features which include constant changes in elevation, a combination of mature indigenous trees and vegetation and some beautiful wetland areas with natural streams and ponds, all creating a dramatic and beautiful setting. The course thus combines links, coastal and parkland vegetation and offers one of the most breath-taking and scenic golf experiences in the world.

The Zimbali course has two distinct sides, with some holes in open former sugar cane fields and many others cutting through the indigenous forest and coastal wetlands. It boasts spectacular sea views from the 14th to 18th holes. The par-3 13th hole is probably the most scenic on the course, bordered by natural wetlands. The stylish Country Club and Golf Shop completes the experience.

Natal North Coast • Parkland 6 524m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 19





Options to Stay – Zimbali Lodge or Fairmont Zimbali Resort

The Zimbali Golf Estate offers a choice of two hotels on site: the smaller more intimate [Zimbali Lodge](#) which is set back from the ocean, and the [Zimbali Resort](#) which is larger, hosts most of the facilities and has its own beach club.



Zimbali Resort pool



No 13 – Pezula Golf Course, Knysna, Garden Route

Pezula Golf Course lies in a stunning setting on the clifftops of the Knysna heads with views to the Indian Ocean to one side, the Knysna Lagoon to another, and indigenous rainforest to a third. The whole course is covered with beautiful fynbos, which strongly resembles Scottish heather.

Pezula course is challenging to the expert, yet it has five tees to every hole which makes it accessible to the social and junior players. The course offers breath-taking views over the forest, the Knysna Lagoon and the Indian Ocean with holes such as the 14th built right on the breach of the cliffs.

It's an experience that is both rewarding and challenging. The succession of forest, cliff and sea locations, changing elevations and clever bunkering offers a true test of skill.

Knysna, Garden Route • Parkland 6 355m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 20

Options to Stay – Pezula or Kanonkop House

Of course the obvious place to stay is the [Pezula Nature & Spa Hotel](#) itself and it certainly boasts a stunning setting and spa.

However, if you are looking for something a little more intimate and personal, again we recommend the hospitable [Kanonkop House](#) which also has Pezula membership so that its guests get to play at Pezula for reduced rates.



Conrad Pezula



Kanonkop Hous



No 14 – Fancourt Outeniqua Course, Garden Route

The **Outeniqua course at Fancourt**, set in rolling parkland, has the stunning backdrop of the Outeniqua Mountains after which it was named.

This course is similar in design to The Montagu, being shaped by the legendary Gary Player. It offers world class conditioning and a setting that takes in mountains, water and wildlife. However, this parklands course is regarded as the easier one, being more open in appearance, yet it has its share of challenges and risk-and-reward moments.

As with all Fancourt courses, there are a variety of tees from which to choose to play, ensuring that you never feel overwhelmed by the course. A gentle opening par 4 with a fairly wide landing area, a large water hazard on the 14th hole and with a good finishing 18th hole, the Outeniqua creates a wonderful challenge for all golfing enthusiasts.

Signature hole: 14th - par 4 - 421m

No surprise this is the toughest hole with its intimidating tee shot over water. If the flag is on the left of the green, play conservatively for the middle as there is water lurking at the back left.

George, Garden Route • Parkland 6 312m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 23



Options to Stay – Fancourt Hotel or The Manor at Fancourt (above)



No 15 – Durban Country Club, KZN

Durban Country Club is a prestigious private club with a very colonial air, evident in its traditions and gabled clubhouse. The golf course boasts a naturally undulating dune layout near the sea, with holes flowing through dense tropical vegetation. The course is scenic, with the Indian Ocean and Durban seafront visible from several tees, but demanding. Extremely challenging to the most skilled golfer, Durban CC will be enjoyed, but rarely mastered. To score well you have to play well.

Three of its holes have been included in Golf Online's top 500 holes – the 2nd, 3rd and 5th holes. For some, the third is the best 3rd hole in the world; for others it is the best par five. Playing from a high tee to a narrow fairway with dense bush and a predatory bunker on the left hand side, it is easy to see why it is the most popular hole on the course. Elsewhere elevated tees and greens are guarded by an array of tropical bushes, tall trees and large bunkers. This, together with the narrow fairways and steep slopes make for a challenging course. The foliage on the course is breath-taking, with virtually every tropical plant imaginable creating a colourful, scented backdrop to your round.

Durban • Parkland 6157m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 24



Another Durban course – Beachwood Golf Course

Originally designed by Sid & Jack Brews in 1930, Beachwood has always been famed for its narrow fairways, indigenous trees and immaculate conditioning. When it amalgamated with Durban Country Club in the late 1990s, Gary Player's design team upgraded some of the holes while introducing additional hazards. The results are to be savoured as you play a course with clever bunkering and water features with superb greens. The land follows rolling contours allowing fairways to follow natural valleys between high grassy banks, requiring precision shots and lay-ups.



Signature Hole: 6th - par 4 - 410m

One of the most demanding holes you will find anywhere, the 6th is set high in the dunes and dog-legs left with a stream, bush and water hazard to be negotiated before the green.

Durban • Parkland 6 016m • Carts available

Options to Stay – Oyster Box Hotel

There are some lovely boutique hotels in Durban, but we prefer Umhlanga Rocks just 20 minutes' drive north of Durban with its golden sandy beaches and ocean views. The [Oyster Box](#) is one of South Africa's most famous old hotels, which has had a multi-million rand makeover, making it one of the loveliest options to stay in KwaZulu Natal.



The Oyster Box Hotel



No 16 – Erinvale Country Club, Cape Winelands

Erinvale is an ‘American-style’ parkland course designed by Gary Player. The setting is stunning with the Hottentot Holland Mountains as a backdrop. However, this beautifully manicured championship course boasts some of the country’s most challenging and spectacular holes.

The course has two distinctly different nine holes to challenge the enthusiastic golfer. Again, water and bunkers feature heavily with the additional challenge of the gradients! It has a driving range, putting green and chipping green for practice.

Erinvale’s demanding front nine meanders through park-like terrain, whilst the back nine provide a contrasting challenge winding its way through the foothills of the mountains with panoramic views of False Bay. On the 15th hole you crest the hill and enjoy a spectacular view of Gordons Bay before you.

Cape Winelands • Parkland 6 506m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 25



Options to Stay – Erinvale Hotel

The [Erinvale Hotel](#) is the obvious choice with lower green fees for hotel residents.



No 17 – Champagne Sport Golf Course, KZN

Located in the beautiful Drakensberg area, this course has to be rated as one of the most scenically memorable golf layouts in South Africa. Designed by Hugh Baiocchi and Kevin Curren, it successfully blends the natural attributes of the terrain and the surrounding beauty with the modern demands of a quality course. It undulates up and around the contours of a valley that nestles under the dominant peaks of Champagne and Cathkin Peaks and incorporates several holes with blind tee shots. Professional and novice alike will appreciate the 84 well-appointed bunkers that line the fairways and greens. The quality of the greens is accredited to Trevor Livesey whose passion remains unabated. Though the drama of the mighty mountains dominates the eye, the course also enjoys gentle vistas where the lower hills create a kaleidoscope of colour blessed with trees, rivers and dams to add even more of a challenge.

Drakensberg • Parkland 6 694m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 27

(The other option in the Drakensberg is the 9-hole course at Cathedral Peak Hotel)



Cathedral Peak Hotel setting and golf course

Options to Stay – Cathedral Peak Hotel

The Drakensberg Mountains are known more for their mountain scenery than their golf courses and this is of course the attraction of playing in such majestic mountain scenery. You'll need to stay at [Cathedral Peak Hotel](#) or Champagne Sports Hotel if you want to play there. We prefer Cathedral Peak Hotel – with its more modest 9 hole golf course – if you wish to combine golf with mountain walks because of its superb location.



No 18 – De Zalze Country Club, Cape Winelands

De Zalze was designed by well-known South African golf architect, Peter Matkovich, who has made the most of this stunning setting and created a course that places a premium on accuracy. The course is set among vineyards and orange groves of the Cape Winelands, alongside the Blaauwklippen River. With magnificent mountain backdrops, this exquisite parkland course presents an exciting challenge to golfers of all standards.

The course has a memorable layout with many challenges, especially the second nine. The oak tree lined Blaauwklippen River which winds its way through the golf estate comes into play at various intervals. The short par-four 12th is played from an island tee over a large stretch of water to a green that can be driven if you're brave enough to carry the water. The par five with two fairways is another interesting hole set amongst the citrus trees.

De Zalze Golf Course is also the first course in the world to be awarded Fair Trade in Tourism certification for its support of sustainable tourism.

Cape Winelands • Parkland 6 385m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 34

Options to Stay – Majeka House, Lanzerac Hotel

Although not on the estate, we recommend staying at either [Oude Werf](#) or [Majeka House](#) in Stellenbosch. The beautifully contemporary and luxurious Oude Werf is in Stellenbosch and only a few minutes away from De Zalze. Majeka House is in a graceful garden setting on the outskirts of Stellenbosch in the heart of the Cape Winelands.



Oude Werf Hotel



Majeka House

Other Golf courses nearby – Stellenbosch

Stellenbosch Golf Course is a championship course in a parkland setting surrounded by mountains and vineyards. Scenic and in excellent condition, Stellenbosch presents a fair challenge with some memorable holes. **(Number 59)**

This par 72 golf course is designed to challenge golfing skill while providing possibly the best views of the magnificent scenery that defines Stellenbosch.



No 19 – Wild Coast Golf Course, Eastern Cape

Designed by well-known golf architect, Robert Trent Jones, the Wild Coast golf course is set against the dramatic background of the Indian Ocean, making it beautiful but punishing for those that stray from the fairways into the rough. When the wind gets up, as it does from time to time, the Wild Coast course can present a very difficult challenge. The course isn't particularly long, but it presents interesting and challenging changes in elevation, and the roughs are truly rough!

The course may be a testing layout for professionals and amateurs alike but its wide fairways and huge greens attract golfers of all levels. The club's signature hole is the par-three 13th, which measures only 146m but is a real tester, and has also been included as one of the 500 best holes in the world by Golf Online.

While the Wild Coast course has many memorable holes, the 12th is probably one of the most breath-taking golf holes in Africa. This par five is played from an elevated tee down to a fairway which cuts through the valley and then rises again to an elevated green. Golf buggies are compulsory but this does not detract from the competitive challenge. (Golf in South Africa - SA Golf Digest 2012-13 Number 10)

South Natal Coast • Parkland 5807 m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 36



Options to Stay – Wild Coast Sun Hotel

To be truthful, the Wild Coast Sun is not one of our favourite places to stay, but the course is worth making an exception for. This perfectly pleasant four star resort hotel combines the three attractions of an excellent golf course, beachside location and great family entertainment. We recommend a stay here if you are travelling with a family.



No 20 – Royal Cape Golf Course, Cape Town

As the oldest club in South Africa, founded in 1885, the prestigious Royal Cape golf course has a sense of history and tradition. It lies in the shadow of Table Mountain and has a flattish parkland layout fringed with lovely mature trees and enhanced by numerous established lakes. This challenging course has been home to the South African Open on many occasions. Water comes into play on the 3rd, 4th and 5th holes, and later from the 14th to 16th holes, and from every hole you enjoy superb views of Table Mountain. The 15th hole is a lovely par 3 requiring a finely-judged shot over water.

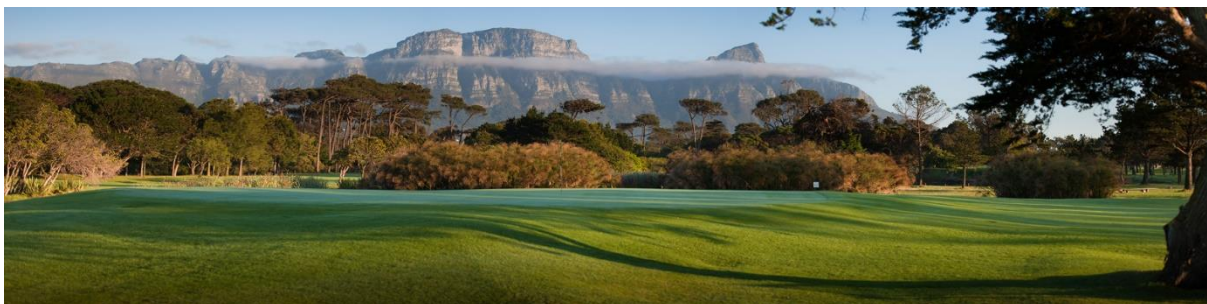
The history of this beautiful golf course began in 1885 when a meeting, chaired by Lt Gen Sir Henry Torrens, was held at the Castle of Good Hope "for the purpose of introducing the game of golf and starting a club for the same." Thus the Royal Cape Golf Club, the first in South Africa, was born.

The course has fast greens which present a real challenge. Given its open layout, it is exposed to the wind. On a windless day Royal Cape can be forgiving, but in a stiff breeze it can be an absorbing challenge, although the mature trees lining the fairways do help. The fairways are narrow, demanding accuracy off the tee. Wayward shots can be heavily penalized amongst the trees and the greens are well bunkered.

In all, the Royal Cape is one of the most exclusive of South African golf courses but also one of the most rewarding. There is a good practice range situated some way from the clubhouse and the golf shop is regarded as one of the finest in the Cape.

Cape Town • Parkland 6 131m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 41





No 21 – Prince’s Grant, KZN North Coast

The Prince’s Grant Estate has a beautiful setting in the sugar cane country on KwaZulu Natal’s Dolphin Coast. It is bordered by lush sugar cane fields on one side and the warm waters of the Indian Ocean on the other.

The Peter Matkovitch designed course with sweeping views of bush, lush vegetation and the ocean, is a mecca for local and international players alike. The artful design of greens, hazards and bunkers makes it an interesting challenge for the higher handicap, and provides ample reward opportunities for the top golfer.

Dolphin Coast, KwaZulu Natal • Parkland 6 196m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 43

Other Golf courses nearby – Mount Edgecombe

Another highly rated course in the same area, is **Mount Edgecombe**. Here, you have a choice of two championship courses – Woods at Mount Edgecombe and Lakes at Mount Edgecombe.

The Woods at Mount Edgecombe has a parkland layout with many exotic trees. It begins with four short holes, then builds in difficulty right to the finish with some imposing water hazards. (Number 57)

Options to Stay – Oyster Box Hotel

You can stay at the Princes Grant hotel. Or, if you would like to sample a range of courses such as Princes Grant, Zimbali and Mount Edgecombe, then we recommend either [The Oyster Box Hotel](#) – one of the finest hotels on the Dolphin Coast at Umhlanga Rocks – or [Zimbali Resort](#) at Ballito.





No 22 – Clovelly Golf Course, Near Cape Town

Clovelly Golf Course used to be a notable mention (outside the top 50) but it has risen strongly in the rankings over the last few years. It is scenically one of the best courses on the Cape Peninsula as it is more varied than many of the parkland courses. The lovely colonial clubhouse enjoys a slightly elevated position above the course which takes full advantage of its coastal setting with deep sand dunes encroaching upon the fairways. It is known for its rolling fairways, undulating holes and magnificent landscaping. Wind also plays a significant factor at Clovelly! A relatively quiet course, Clovelly is a tight par 72 with a testing mix of interesting holes and elevated greens accompanied by beautiful views of Silvermine River and lakes.

Sand dunes abound the course, which has natural water features and a wide variety of indigenous fauna and flora, notably the variety of trees lining the fairways.

Cape Town • Coastal 5 890m • Carts available • SA Top 100 Courses 2023
No 47

Options to Stay – Steenberg Hotel

It makes sense to base yourself at the lovely [Steenberg Hotel](#) which is relatively close-by and has its own top-rated golf course (see below). But really you can choose to stay anywhere in Cape Town.



No 23 – Steenberg Golf Course, Cape Town

Steenberg is the first real golf course in Cape Town in the rankings. Surrounded by vineyards, Steenberg's parkland 18 hole golf course lies in the verdant Constantia valley in the crook of the Constantiaberg Mountains, with extensive mountain and forest views from the course. Designed by well-known South African golf architect, Peter Matkovich, Steenberg offers some testing and varied golf with tee boxes amongst the vineyards, much use of water, and natural sand banks in the heathland.

The course features four distinct areas: wetlands, parkland, the Cape flats and fynbos. With five different tees, the course can be enjoyed by all, from championship to junior level. Visually spectacular and technically challenging, these are the sort of holes that make golfing a true pleasure.

Constantia • Parkland 6 296m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 45



Options to Stay – Steenberg Hotel

It makes most sense to base yourself at the lovely [Steenberg Hotel](#) which gives hotel resident rates for green fees. It also has a stunning wine estate, restaurant and spa.



Steenberg Hotel



Steenberg Hotel bedroom



No 24 – Lost City Course, Sun City

The Lost City Country Club has lost considerable rankings due to Covid. However, we expect it to regain ground in the next couple of years. It lies adjacent to the Palace of the Lost City in the Sun City resort. It certainly is a conversation piece and an experience not to be missed. The course defies being bracketed into any particular genre, having touches of mountain, desert and even African parkland in its make-up. Here, the golfer can choose to tackle the course from its championship tees (suggested only for the longer hitting, single-figure handicappers), the standard markers or forward tees. Even playing the shortest route presents a great test as the approaches to the greens – clad in bent grass and protected by bunkers – demand careful judgment.



The rich green fairways of the course offer a dramatic contrast to the arid bushveld backdrop and the barren waste bunkers – a special feature of this intriguing course. The desert style design of the golf course is quite unique amongst South Africa's green parkland and links courses. Baobab trees and cacti are among the aesthetic attractions, and baboons are often seen on the course. The views of the countryside and the Palace are breath-taking.

Signature hole: 13th - par 3

A green in the shape of Africa bordered by a crocodile-infested waterhole, home to 38 crocodiles, some nearly 2 metres long so it's best to leave your ball if you hit a wayward shot into water!

Sun City • Parkland 6 983m • Golf Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023 No 65

Options to Stay – Palace at the Lost City Hotel or Sun City Cascades

The best option is the [Palace at the Lost City](#), the 5 star flagship hotel within the Sun City resort. We offer 3 and 5 night golfing packages.



No 25 – Oubaai, Near Mossel Bay, Garden Route

In designing Oubaai, Ernie Els has taken full advantage of the spectacular landscape with the support of Nicklaus Design. The philosophy is based on flexibility where golf concepts are moulded according to the landscape, not vice versa. With its unique cliff-side location and high vantage point above rivers and valleys, the initial impression is of large open fairways, superb directional and protective bunkers and large undulating greens. But despite the seeming freedom off the tee there is a strategy that requires intelligent positioning of each shot.

Signature hole: 17th - par 3 - 132m

With an elevated tee and breath-taking views of the Indian Ocean, the ever-changing winds and undulating green guarded by four bunkers make this a tough little hole.

Oubaai • Herold's Bay • Links • 6 516m • Carts • SA Top 100 Courses 2023

No 68



See Accommodation Options for Pinnacle Point – Page 15



Notable Golf Courses in Cape Town

Cape Town's golf courses have dropped down the rankings in South Africa recently partly because of the water shortages back in 2017-2018 which are now a thing of the past. But also because of loss of tourism revenue to many courses, and the emergence of so many new good residential courses. But there are still some stunning courses.

Top Cape Town Golf Courses	Ranking in SA Top 100 courses
Royal Cape	41
Steenberg	45
Clovelly	47
Atlantic Beach	62
Westlake	77
Milnerton	86

Notable Golf Courses in Johannesburg

Many of South Africa's top courses are in Joburg. If you are a keen golfer, it's worth extending this to two nights so that you can play on one of the following top-rated courses.

Selection of some top Johannesburg Golf Courses	Ranking in top 100 courses in SA 2022
Blair Atholl	6
Glendower	8
Royal Johannesburg & Kensington – East	11 – see above
Steyn City	17
Johannesburg Country Club – Woodmead	22
Kyalami	26
Pretoria Country Club	28
Royal Johannesburg & Kensington - West	33
Irene Country Club (semi-country)	61

Other Notable Mentions

As commented in our intro, many of the top courses are not necessarily on tourism routes, some being located in mining areas (Sishen No13, Goldfields etc). But here are some top courses which are in beautiful areas of the country.

Other Scenically located Golf Courses	Ranking in top 100 courses in SA
Highland Gate, Dullstroom	21
Pecanwood Golf Course, Hartbeespoort	35
Plettenberg Bay Country Club	49
Gowrie Farm, KZN Midlands	54
San Lameer, KZN South Coast	60
Umhlali , KZn North Coast	67
Olivewood, Chintsa East, Eastern Cape	88



Swaziland: Royal Swazi Hotel

This spectacular championship course is one of the most scenic locations found in the world in the tiny Kingdom of Swaziland. Opened in 1966, it has been laid out on the slopes of the Lebombo Range that curves gently down into the valley. The first nine holes are comparatively level but the second nine fully exploits the mountainous terrain. Challenging features include lakes, gullies thick with vegetation, out-of-bound areas running close to fairways, swirling breezes, clusters of magnificent trees and indigenous plants and wickedly sited bunkers – one is so steep it requires steps to facilitate access.

Signature hole: 6th - par 3 - 163m

A wayward shot to the right is out of bounds, while one to the left is a lost ball.

Stay at the [Royal Swazi Sun](#), a four star resort hotel and spa.



Next Steps

We hope that this guide to our top golf courses in South Africa has whetted your appetite for a golfing holiday in South Africa! Some courses, including Leopard Creek, Legend Golf Resort and the Gary Player Course, are close to some of the best game-viewing in the country, so it's easy for us to tailor-make a golf and safari trip for you...



Have a look at some of our sample golf holidays in South Africa below, to get an idea of how a trip would work. Some of these are self-drive examples but all can be done using private touring and transfers if you prefer.

Check out our golf pages [here](#)

- [Cape Golf Self-drive – 7 nights Self Drive](#)
- [Cape & Garden Route Golf – 9 nights Self Drive or Escorted](#)
- [Golf & Game Safari – 13 nights Escorted or Self Drive](#)
- [Sun City Golf tour – 3 nights](#)
- [Rovos Rail Golf Safari \(9 nights\)](#)
- [Rovos Rail African Collage Safari with Golf \(9 or 10 nights\)](#)

Contact us for a [tailor-made golf quote](#)

Finally check out some of our handy tips overleaf...



Cedarberg Africa has been designing tailor-made holidays and safaris to Southern and Eastern Africa for over 20 years. A fully licensed and bonded tour operator in South Africa & also in the UK, we assure you of great value and specialist, unbiased and expert advice.

Top Tips

- Plan well in advance for good tee off times
- Decide if you are just coming for golf & more golf, or whether you want a safari and to see some of the highlights of the country
- List what else you want to see to narrow down the areas to visit
- Contact a specialist tour operator to ensure a well-designed and relaxing trip
- Don't try to do too much in terms of playing golf and travelling on the same day
- We recommend self-drive if you want to travel but private tours & transfers are also a great option...
- Decide on your *real* budget