

Top Things to do with Kids in Cape Town



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It's coming up to the prime holiday season in Cape Town, so we've put together our Top 20 Things to do with Kids in Cape Town. It's focused a little more on older kids (from 6 years upwards) but there are a plenty of things which are perfect for little ones as well. We've divided our list into four sections. (Some activities could have easily fitted into more than one section).

Caveat: I have focused on activities for children on holiday in Cape Town, so I have a preference for things that are uniquely Capetonian or at least that are done particularly well here. So, though there are wonderful ice rinks, toboggan trails etc., these are available all over the world. So, they didn't make the cut (Sorry!). Pricing and telephone numbers were correct at time of press with current exchange rates but are subject to change.



Some Ideas on where to go with Kids

Waterfront

- *Aquarium*
- *Playdate @ SuperPark*
- *Watershed Arts & Crafts*
- *Scratch Patch*
- *Boat Trips*

Outdoors Adventure

- *Table Mountain Cable Car*
- *Walk on Table Mountain*
- *Abseiling*
- *Kirstenbosch & Skywalk*
- *Red City Bus*
- *Shark Cage Diving*

Museums & Indoors activities

- (Great for rainy days)*
- *Planetarium & Company gardens*
 - *HintHunt*
 - *Science Centre*
 - *Heart of Cape Town Museum*

Cape Peninsula

- *Seal Island Boat Trip*
- *Imhoff's Farm*
- *Cape Peninsula Lighthouse*
- *Warrior Toy Museum*
- *Swimming with penguins*

Price Range Key



Low means less than \$25 or £20 for a sample family of 2 adults and 2 kids under 12 years



Moderate is typically less than \$40 or £32 for this sample family of 4



OK is typically less than \$80 or £63 for sample family of 4



Pricey varies and we suggest you check the website for exact pricing





1 - V&A Waterfront

Two Oceans Aquarium

Enjoyable place for kids of all ages with different areas exploring the unique marine life of the Cape. Probably the most exciting sections are the predator and penguin exhibits as well as the touch pool and interactive centre. The very young ones will enjoy the inter-active Kids Centre.

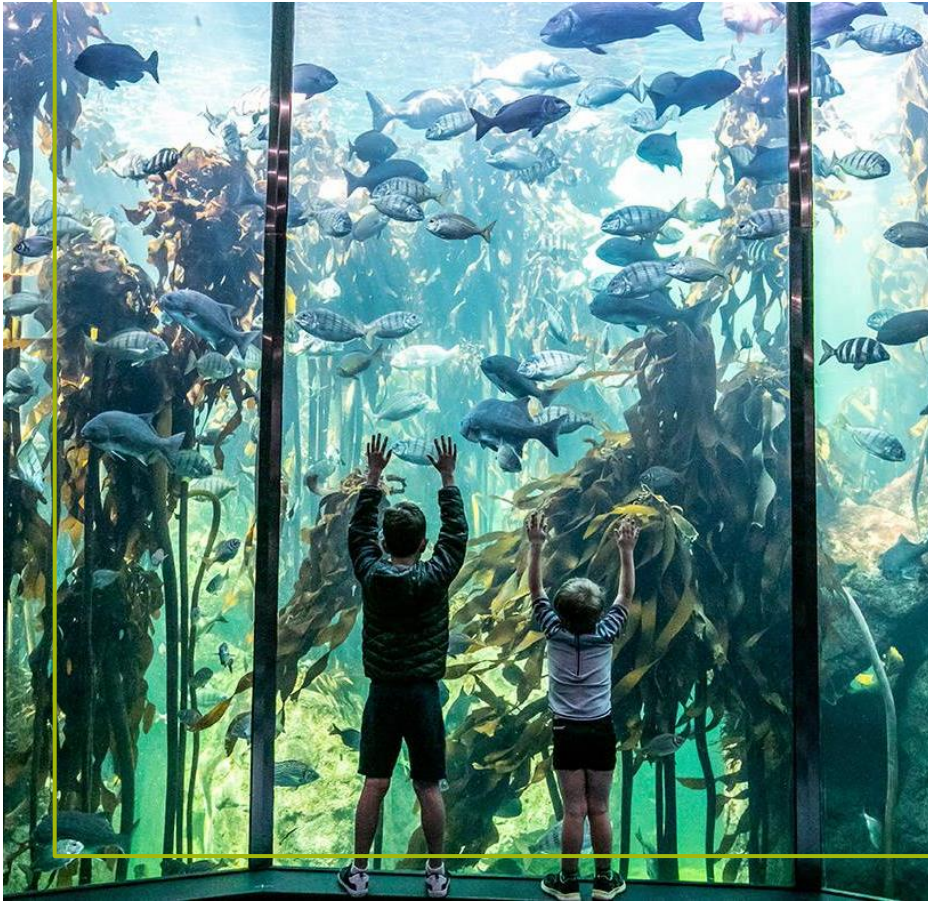
There's also a Penguin Encounter (at extra cost) which is an informative and exhilarating encounter with these unique birds (ideally for kids over 8 years). Try to time your visit to coincide with their feeding times (see their website).

Opening times: 9.30am to 6pm daily

Age Range: All ages. Penguin encounter suitable for older kids of 8-10 years up

Price Range: Moderate

Contact details: 021 418 3823 | V&A Waterfront
www.aquarium.co.za or buy online



PlayDate Superpark

Looking for a safe environment to have fun with the kids? PlayDate offers a world of Adventure, Fun and Fitness. They aim to deliver a unique experience of joyful play which excites and unites Families and Friends.

PlayDate target age group is 0-12 years old, with a host of activities on offer. Play starts on the hour and it is always best to book online to avoid disappointment as they do get quite busy.

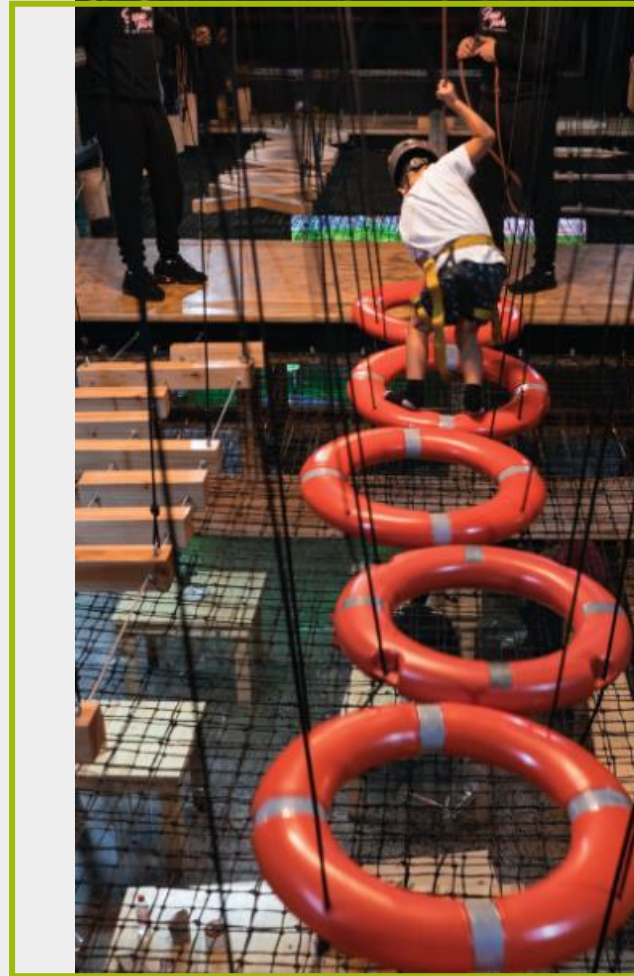
PlayDate offers a dedicated Toddler Area for ages 0-6 years old and an area for ages 4 and older. Under 1's 1st hour is free and Under 2's pay R35 for first hour, and Adults pay R30. Thereafter normal rates apply. Should your little wish to explore other areas within the park we ask that mom or dad explore with your little one, as some areas in the park are extreme.

Opening times: 10am to 5pm daily

Age Range: 0-12 years old

Price Range: Low

Contact details: 078 357 7364 | V&A Waterfront
<https://superpark.co.za>





Watershed Craft Market

The Watershed is a really lovely indoor craft market with over 365 boutique shops/stalls selling ceramics, furniture, textiles and fashion including lots of funky kids' clothes. This may or may not be your family's cup of tea depending on how much you like 'retail therapy'. But as with the Rugby Experience, there's plenty on offer at the Waterfront if only some of the family want to check it out. Really easy to part with your money here!

Opening times: 10am to 7pm daily

Age Range: All ages.

Price Range: Low to Pricey

Contact details: 021 408 7600 | V&A Waterfront
<https://www.waterfront.co.za/area/watershed/>

Scratch Patch

This doesn't really pass the 'Only in Cape Town' rule that I set myself. But it is so close to the Aquarium and Watershed; kids love it, so I succumbed...

The Scratch Patch is a touch-feel exhibit where kids can dig for semi-precious stones, paying a varying fee depending on how large a bag of stones they want to collect.

The Waterfront Scratch Patch is directly opposite the Aquarium and Watershed with very easy parking (as one of the main car parks is right beside it). It also offers a mini-golf 'cave' course, also under cover. Yes, I know it's kitsch. (But you know it's fun, especially when people's latent golfing competitiveness comes out.)

Opening times: 9am to 4:30pm daily

Age Range: 4 – 8 years for the Scratch Patch; 4 – 12 (and adults) for the mini-golf.
Obviously, we wouldn't recommend babies/toddlers due to swallowing risks

Price Range: Free to enter the Scratch Patch (you pay for stones).
Low Price for the mini- golf

Contact details: 021 419 9429 | Portwood Ridge, Dock Road opposite the Aquarium
www.scratchpatch.co.za





Boat Cruises from the Waterfront

There is a vast array of boat cruises from the V&A Waterfront. These range from a 30 min harbour boat cruise up to a longer 1½ hour sunset yacht cruise (traditional or catamaran). You can also opt for an adrenalin-filled jet boat ride. There's even a Jolly Roger Pirate boat cruise which promises swashbuckling adventure and surprises during its hour-long cruise.

We recommend checking out the V&A website to get a sense of the sort of boats available. We can pre-book the boat cruises for you which is recommended in peak season.

Departure: *Varies by boat, generally throughout the day, every half an hour*

Age Range: *All ages though perhaps not very young kids on the longer trips?*

Price Range: *OK to Pricey*

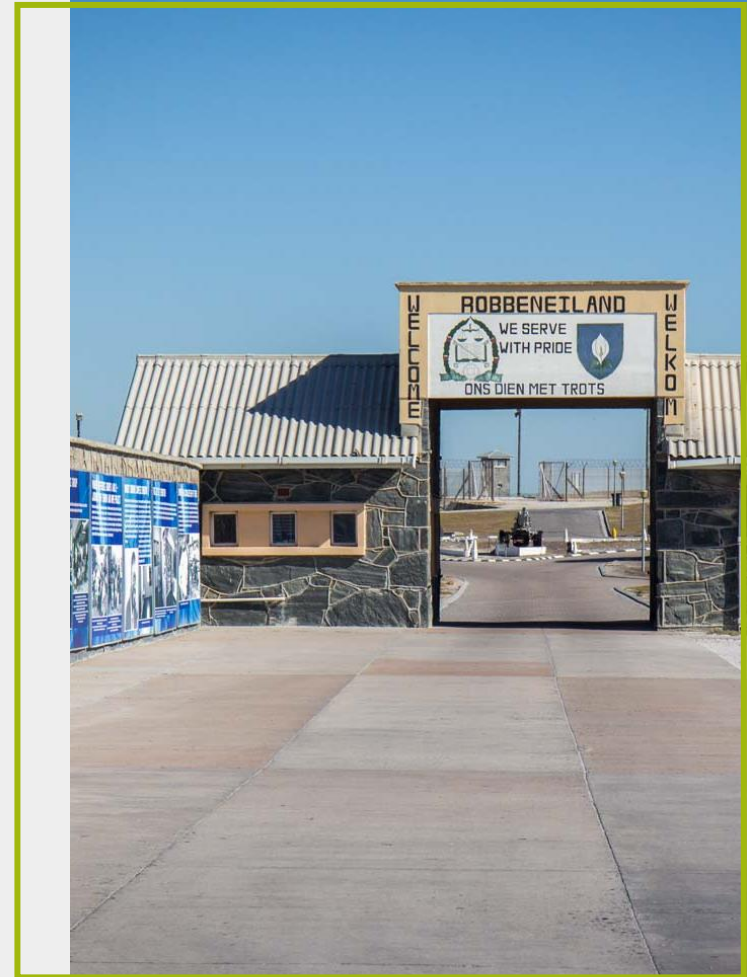
Contact details: www.waterfront.co.za/activities/sea

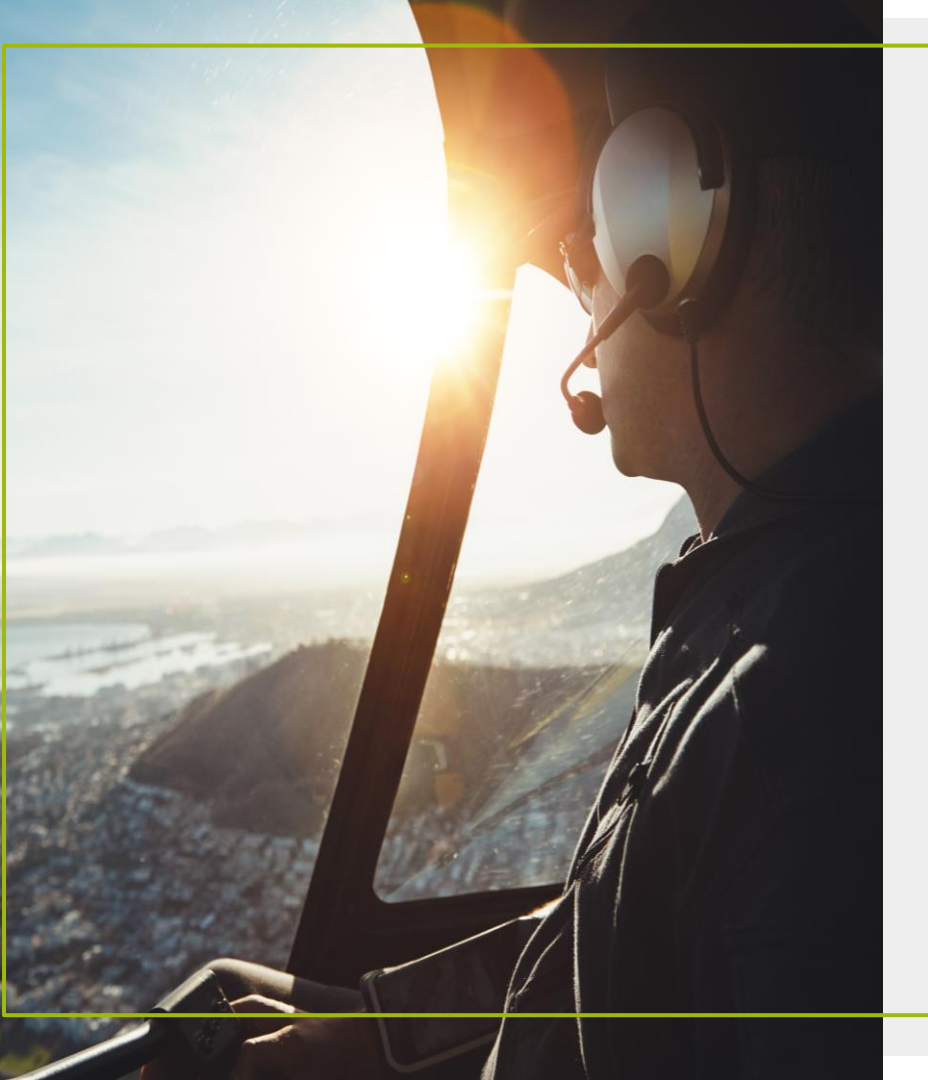


Also in the Waterfront

Robben Island Museum

- Embark on a fully guided tour to South Africa's famous World Heritage Site: walk in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, tour the island's rich fauna and flora treasures, visit the lime quarry where the political prisoners worked, and see the village where former warders lived. The standard tour to Robben Island is 3.5 hours long, including the two half-hour ferry rides. The ferries can carry 150 people and they depart four times per day, weather permitting, from the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.
- <https://www.robben-island.org.za/>





Chavonnes Battery Museum

- We invite you to step below sea level to the sand of the original shoreline that has been hidden since 1724 among the Archaeology ruins of the Chavonnes Battery, a VOC Fort that was ripped apart and buried in 1860 and since 2008 a Visitor Attraction about the history of Cape Town.
- <https://www.chavonnesbattery.co.za/>

The Huey Helicopter Co.

- The Huey Helicopter Company owns the only Huey in the world licensed to carry passengers in simulated combat flights or scenic flights. The helicopter was used in the Vietnam war and has been fully restored to exact specifications. It is frequently used in movies and TV series and is licensed to carry 2 – 6 passengers. There is probably no better way to experience the true majesty of the Cape's beauty than from inside a helicopter. Or for the more adventurous, experience the ultimate rush of a simulated combat mission.
- <https://sporthelicopters.co.za/huey-helicopter-rides-cape-town/>

A person is sitting on a rock, looking out over a coastal town and a mountain peak. The scene is set against a clear blue sky. The person is wearing a blue shirt and shorts. The town below is densely packed with buildings, and the ocean is visible to the left. A prominent mountain peak is visible in the background.

Outdoor Activities



CEDARBERG AFRICA

Table Mountain by Cable Car

Heading up Table Mountain is a must, so I won't spend too long persuading you. It is very popular especially at the height of summer. You first have to buy tickets (if you haven't got them online) and then you queue to get into the cable car itself. Queuing for hours with small kids is not pretty, so follow our 'survival' tips below.

Our Hot 'Survival' Tips

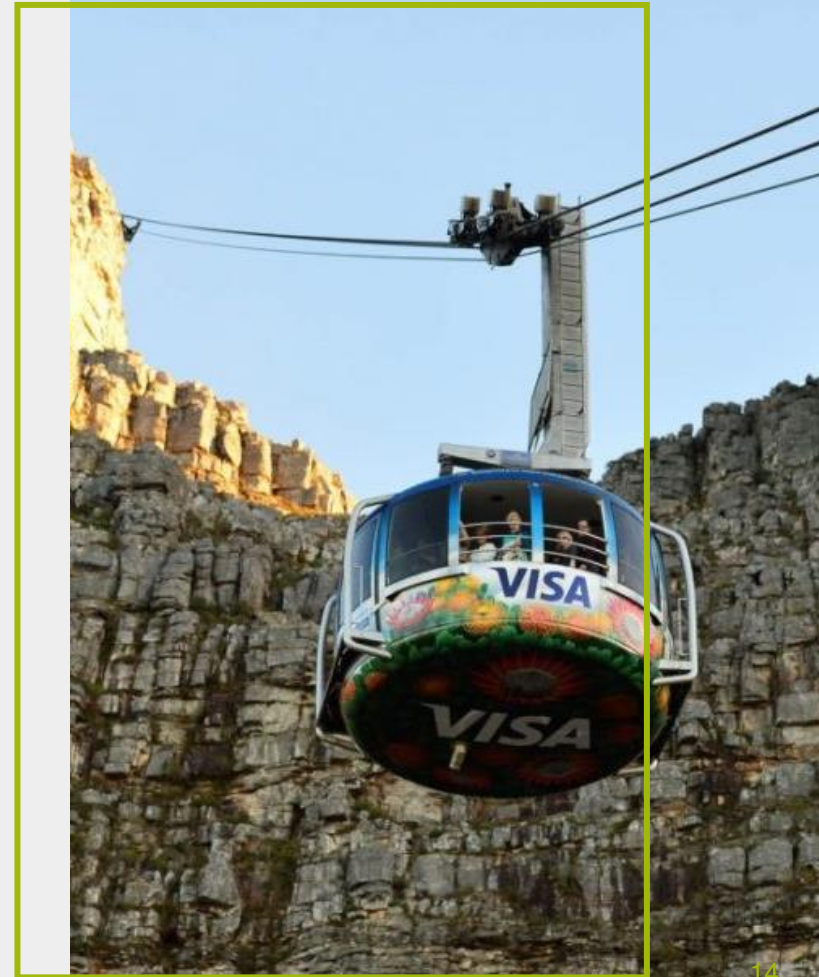
- Book your tickets online (which saves you from first ticket buying queue). Online tickets are valid for 7 days from your chosen date so that if wind or weather closes the cable car, you can go another time. (This is not so vital in the winter but almost essential in the summer.)
- However, you still have the 'getting on the cable car' queue so either head up there early so that you are there at least 15 mins before the first car up. (i.e., ahead of the tour buses who seem to arrive as the cable car starts).
- Alternatively, you can head up Table Mountain in the afternoon or early evening in summer. It is sometimes windy and so the cable car can close BUT the queue is much, much shorter.
- There is a sunset special in summer-time which is virtually half price if you go up after 6pm. This is a popular option with the locals so expect a bit of queuing around 6pm...

Opening times: *8.30am from April to October, 8am from November to March. Last car up ranges by season from 5pm in winter to 8pm at the height of summer.*

Age Range: *All ages.*

Price Range: *Moderate to OK, Children under 4 are free. Family discounts in winter.*

Contact details: Book tickets online! www.tablemountain.net





Walk on Table Mountain

I am always amazed at how little people are prepared to walk. Yes, there are stunning viewpoints close to the top of the cable car but there are also lots of people! If you are happy to walk just 20-30 minutes away from the crowds, you get the feel for the majesty of the mountain.

We recommend the easy walk to Maclears Beacon which is the highest point on the mountain at 1088 metres (3,570 feet). Follow the trail marked on the map (which you are given with your tickets) which is signposted with yellow footprints. After about 15 mins, the trail does a slightly tricky little descent (fine for most people but grandparents may struggle). At this point most people give up! So, as you continue to Maclears Beacon, the wilderness of the mountain is apparent. You can come back the way you came or take the 'front' trail which heads along the front edge of the 'table' with stunning panoramic views of the city below.

There are several walking routes UP Table Mountain, but I wouldn't recommend them for children. If you have fit teenagers, then do some research using the website link below.

Age Range: *Depending on your children: 6 years if your children are used to walking, older if not*

Price Range: *Free (You only pay for the cable car)*

Contact details: *Check out the Table Mountain National Park website:*
www.sanparks.co.za/parks/table_mountain/tourism



Abseiling off Table Mountain

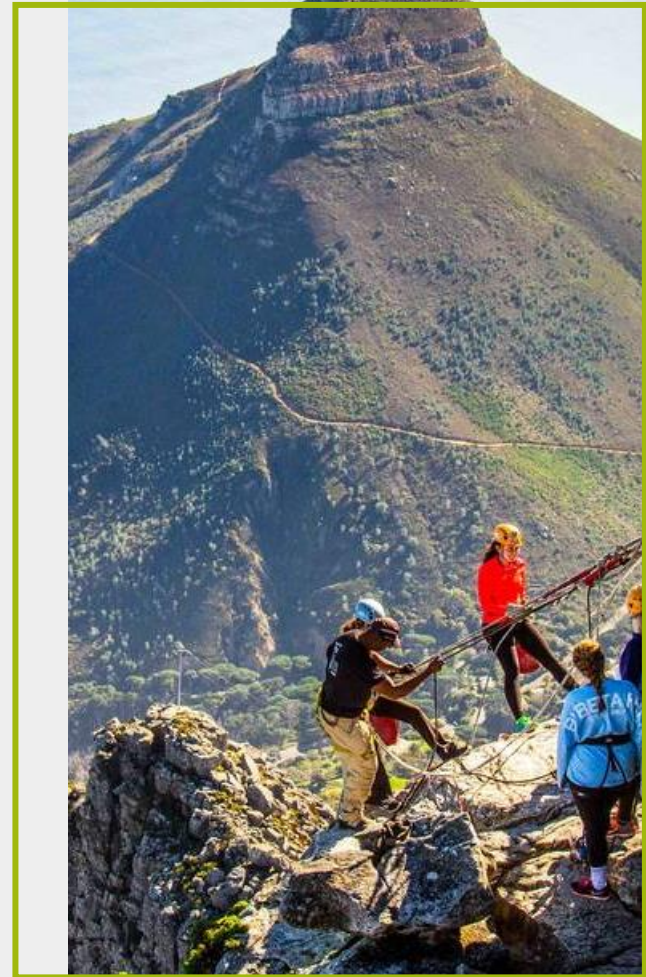
This is a great adventure for all the family. Close to the top of the Cable Car station (Upper Cable Car), is the Abseil Africa operation which offers the highest commercial abseil in the world. I have done it and thoroughly enjoyed it. Adrenalin courses through you as they make you lean back over the edge and put your hands in the air, but once you get going, it is easy with epic views (if you are feeling relaxed enough to take them in!) The 112 meter abseil is followed by a 20-minute hike back up the mountain so that you can get a taste of walking the mountain without having to slog up for 2 hours.

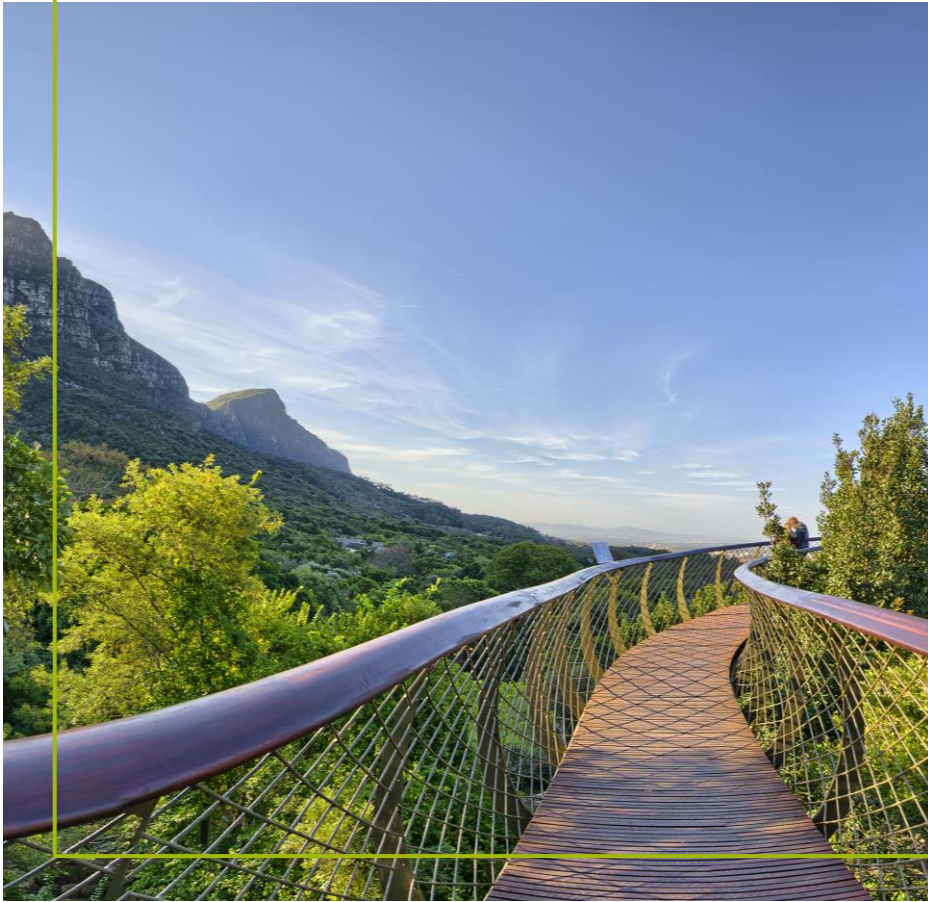
In summer I would recommend booking ahead as otherwise you could have to wait a while before they can fit you in. In winter, when the weather is variable, I also recommend ringing them to check that they are operational as they won't offer abseiling in poor conditions.

Age Range: 10 years upwards

Price Range: Pricey – R995 per person

Contact details: www.abseilafrica.co.za or 021 424 4760/072 065 1520 (text after hours)





Kirstenbosch & the Sky Walk

Kirstenbosch is billed as the nicest garden in Africa, and I'll go with that description. I know when I was a child, looking around public botanical gardens was not really my idea of fun. But here's three reasons why Kirstenbosch is one step ahead!

- The 130m skywalk snakes its way through the forest canopy of the arboretum
- After enjoying the gardens, you can head up the foothills of Table Mountain to walk along the Contour path through the forest. If you have teenagers, you can even get up onto Table Mountain via the steep but shaded Skeleton and Nursery ravine trails. See http://www.sanparks.co.za/parks/table_mountain/tourism/safe_hiking.php
- There's a choice of eating options in the Garden from Moyos African restaurant to more casual coffee shops. A time-honored favourite is to take a family picnic.

Opening Hours: *8am to 7pm (September to March); 8am to 6pm April to August.
The conservatory is open from 9am to 5pm*

Age Range: *All ages*

Price Range: *Low*

Contact details: *021 799 8783 for info 021 799 8782 for tickets or
www.sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenbosch*



Red Topless Sight-Seeing Busses

These are 'hop on, hop off' bus tours. You buy a day ticket and can spend as long as you like at the various attractions en route. The time given below is the time on the bus but most people spend the best part of the day. You can start the tour at any of the designated bus stops on the route so enquire from your hotel as to where the nearest one is. There are two main routes to choose from. There is also a Purple wine route tour, a shorter city tour as well as a sunset bus trip.

Red City Tour – takes 90 minutes with 11 stops including the V&A Waterfront, Jewel Africa (for the Bo-Kaap quarter), Table Mountain cable car, Camps Bay beaches, Sea Point and back to the V&A Waterfront...

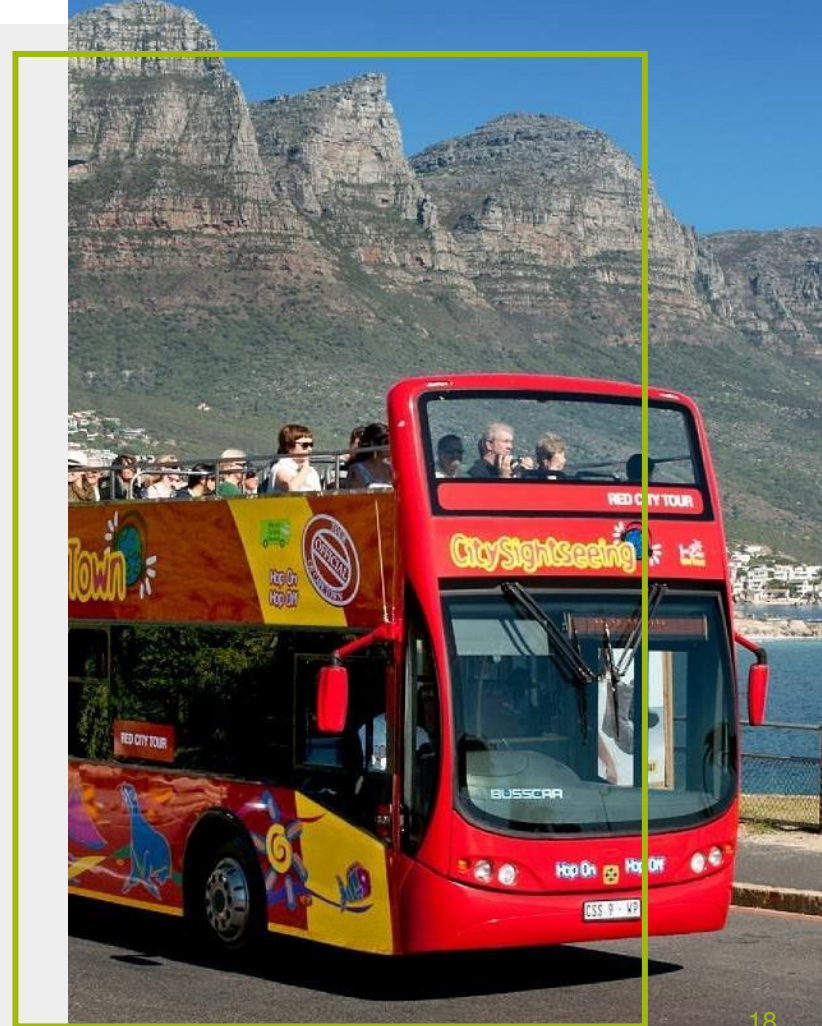
Blue Peninsula Tour – circles the back of Table Mountain, takes 2+ hours on the bus with 14 stops including V&A Waterfront, Company Gardens, Kirstenbosch Gardens, Constantia Nek, World of Birds, Imizamo Yethu Township (for a short guided walking tour), Hout Bay, Camps Bay, Sea Point and back to the V&A Waterfront.

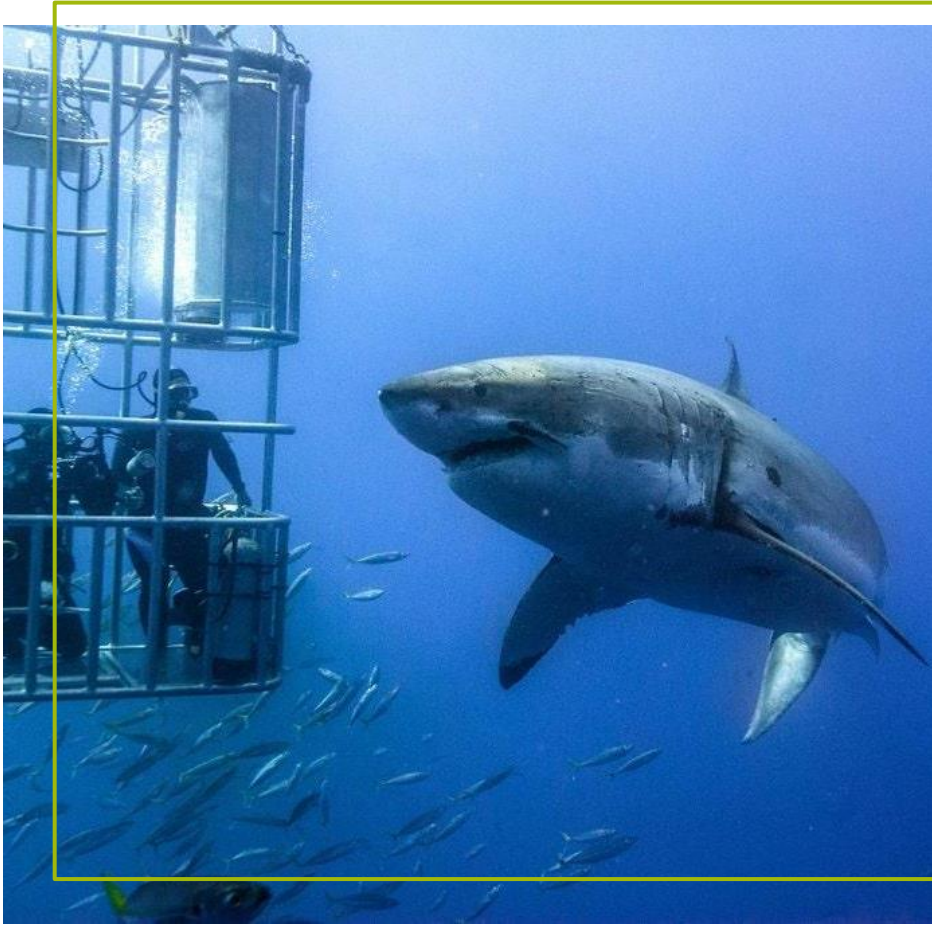
Opening Hours: *The first stops start at 8am in summer with the last tour starting at 5.15pm*

Age Range: *All ages*

Price Range: *OK - 10% online discount*

Contact details: *021 799 8783 for info. Buy tickets online at www.citysightseeing.co.za*





Shark Cage Diving

This is an adrenalin-rush of note but only suitable for older kids as the boat cruise is long (generally 4 hours) and younger kids don't enjoy it. The most 'famous' area for shark cage diving is off Gansbaai near Hermanus. This would be our preferred option as the season is much longer, but it is a 1½ to 2 hour drive each way. (We recommend that you stay at least one night in the Hermanus area). If you don't have time for that, and don't want to travel so far, the Cape Peninsula also has its own shark dive and whale-watching operators. The False Bay season is shorter, generally from May to mid September, but the drive or transfer is only an hour.

Opening Hours: *Daily cruises in season, depending on tides*

Age Range: *Only from 10 years and older*

Price Range: *Pricey – we recommend pre-booking*

Contact details: *You can book through us (at no extra cost) or book direct. We recommend African Shark eco-charters*
www.ultimate-animals.com





Museums and Indoor Attractions

(Also perfect for rainy days)



CEDARBERG AFRICA

Planétarium, SA Museum & Company Gardens

The Planetarium forms part of the South African Museum and lies at the top of the Company Gardens in the city centre. The Planetarium, is a ‘celestial theatre’, utilizing the complex Minolta star machine and multiple projectors to transport you through the wonders of the universe. Inside the domed auditorium, they recreate the night sky. Thus, the Planetarium sky is always clear, regardless of the weather outside. There are scheduled ‘shows’ which change constantly. Check out their website for what’s on whilst you are here. There are usually two shows, one aimed at younger children, and one aimed at teenagers (and interested parents).

Whilst there, check out the SA Museum as well which focuses on South Africa’s natural and social history. It is very informative but it’s fair to say that it is not cutting edge in terms of interactive exhibits for kids. But well worth spending an hour if you have time.

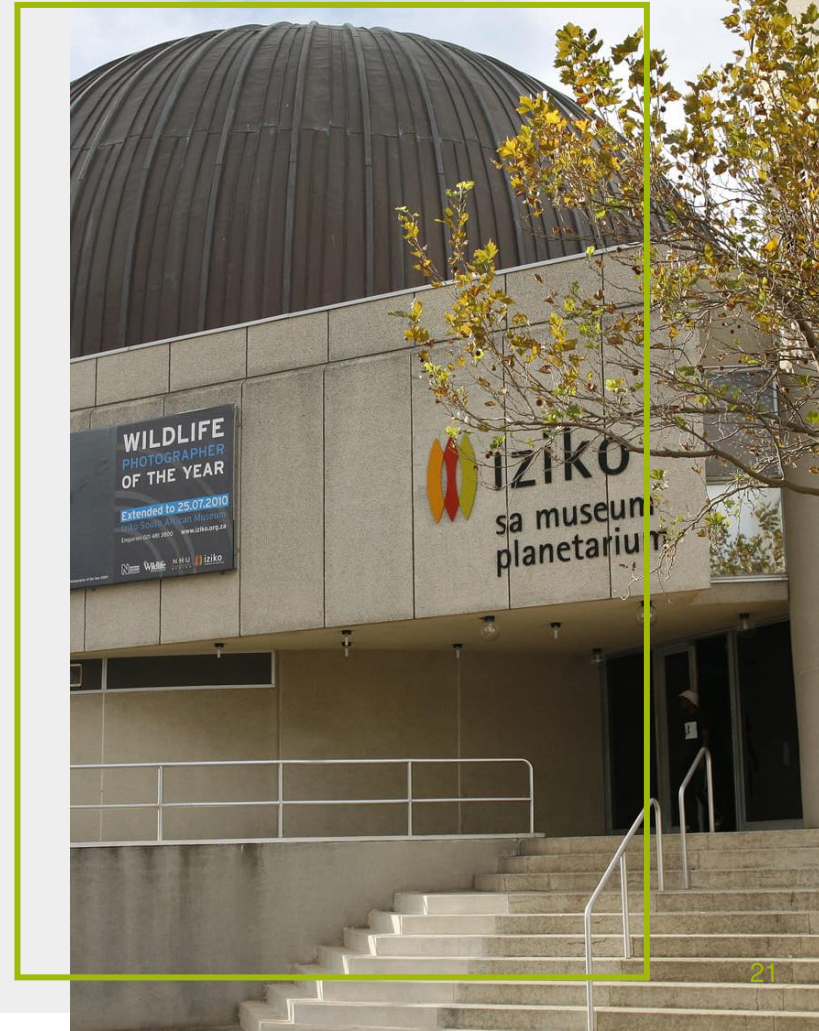
Afterwards you can enjoy a stroll through the company gardens, perhaps having lunch at the new contemporary garden restaurant and enjoying the contemporary art exhibits.

Opening times: Open daily from 10am to 5pm. Planetarium show times on website

Age Range: Planetarium shows – varies; Museum all ages

Price Range: Low

Contact details: 021 481 3900 or <http://www.iziko.org.za/museums/planetarium>
NB: This website also gives details of all the main Cape Town museums





HintHunt

This is a fantastic option for families with older kids or teenagers. It's in a non-descript building at the trendy Old Biscuit Mill. Parties of between 3-6 people (so ideal family size) are given 60 minutes to solve your way to freedom. On arrival you are shown to a room and the door is locked. You have 60 minutes to collectively crack codes, decipher difficult puzzles and unearth a series of clues in order to secure your freedom. "It's like Big Brother meets CSI" explains one of the founders.

This little exercise has proved immensely popular being voted one of the top attractions in Cape Town. There's an exhilarating heart-racing sense of urgency as you desperately navigate your way through all the puzzles using the props at hand in the room. Of course, it will only suit certain types of families, ones who are competitive, enjoy a challenge and ones which can work as a team (and don't get too worked up!) Apparently, there's a less than 50% success rate but win or lose, everyone enjoys it.

Afterwards you can browse through some of the charming trendy shops of the Old Biscuit Mill or enjoy one of the many great eateries which have opened up in and around the Mill. You need to reserve a set time to participate using their website. You can book up to 3 months ahead

Age Range: *12 years upwards but you can be younger. (Obviously with younger children your chances of succeeding go down...)*

Price Range: *Pricey (Price varies by number of people)*

Contact details: *021 404 1967, 3rd floor, Main Courtyard, Old Biscuit Mill, 373-375 Albert Road, Woodstock, www.hinthead.co.za*





Heart of Cape Town Museum

A great but little-known museum documenting the story behind the world's first heart transplant which took place in South Africa in 1967. Great for older kids with enquiring minds. In the same area as the Hint Hunt and Science Centre.

Guided Tours: 9m, 11am, 1pm and 3pm, 7 days a week

Age Range: 8 – 16 years

Price Range: Low

Contact details: 021 404 1967, Groote Schuur Hospital, Main Road, Observatory



Science Centre

Though it's not exclusively Capetonian, the Science Centre is a great option for kids (and parents) and is also conveniently close to the Heart of Cape Town Museum. With more than 250 interactive exhibits and mind-boggling puzzles, the Cape Town Science Centre is a world of discovery under one roof. As well as a series of fun and often inter-active science exhibitions, there are also scheduled exhibitions and shows, usually at the weekends. See their website for the outline with times.

Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday 9am to 4.30pm, Sunday 10am to 4.30pm

Age Range: Perhaps 5 years upwards

Price Range: Pricey

Contact details: 021 300 3200, 3708 Main Road, Observatory
www.ctsc.org.za



Cape Peninsula



There is so much on offer on the Cape Peninsula that you could easily spend two days here, if you have time. If you don't have two days, then you'll have to pick and choose unfortunately...

Suggested two day programme

Day 1:

- World of Birds • Duiker Island • Chapmans Peak Drive •
- Cape of Good Hope Park •

Day 2:

- Simonstown • Boulders Beach •
- Imhoffs Farm & Kirstenbosch •

(see Number 9 above)

Alternatively, you could combine the second day with shark cage diving/whale-watching in season

(See Number 11 above)

The following are in sequence assuming that you travel around the Cape Peninsula from Camps Bay to Hout Bay to Noordhoek to Kommetjie to the Good Hope National Park to Boulders Beach to Simonstown...

Hout Bay – Duiker Island Seal Cruises

From the city centre, Waterfront or Atlantic side, most people first head to Hout Bay to the start of the spectacular drive along the Chapmans Peak Drive with its breath-taking views. This is great for all ages and not to be missed.

However before leaving Hout Bay, you may want to take a boat cruise out to Duiker Island (also commonly known as Seal Island) to see the Cape Fur Seals in their natural habitat. There are several companies operating but we recommend Drumbeat Charters as its boat is specially designed to be able to get close to the thousands of seals. The cruise takes approx 40 minutes. They also have longer cruises which include Chapmans Peak or Shipwrecks.

Note: You can also visit World of Birds in Hout Bay which is a massive bird aviary. Contact them on 021 790 2730, Valley Road, Hout Bay

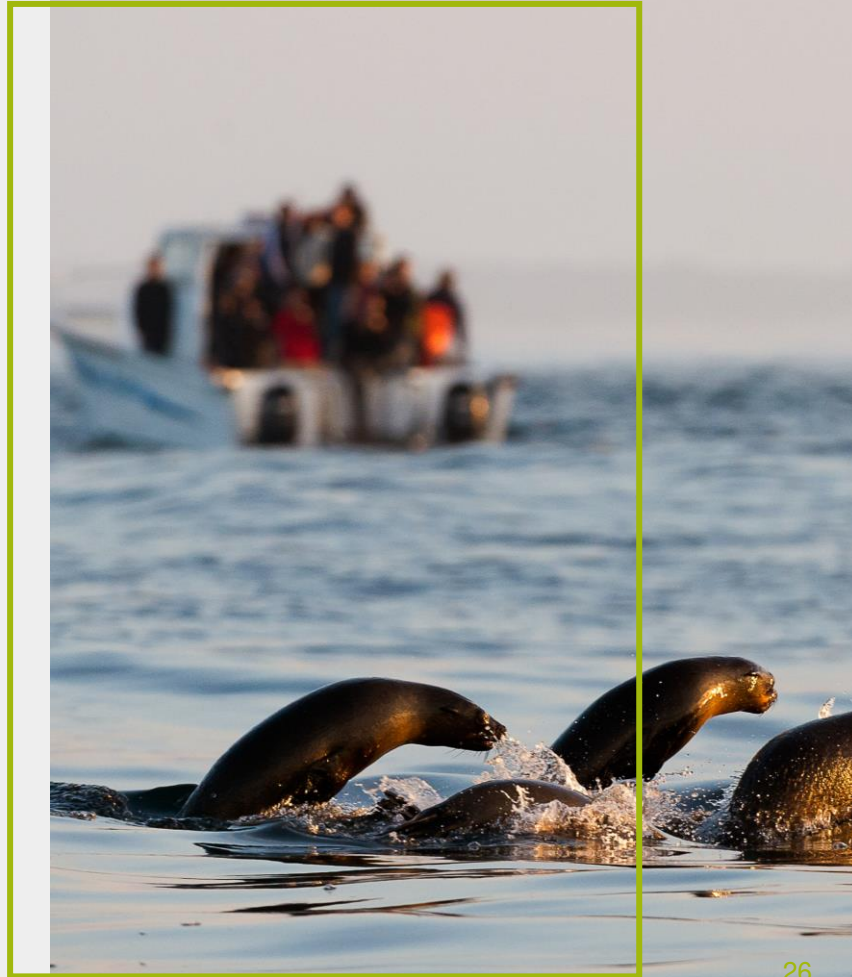
www.worldofbirds.org.za

Scheduled Cruises: 8.30am, 9.15am, 10am and 10.45am

Age Range: All ages

Price Range: OK to Pricey

Contact details: 082 658 7055 or <http://drumbeatcharters.co.za/>





Imhoff's Farm

Imhoff's farm is a good place to stop en route to Cape Point (or on the way back if you prefer). This historical Cape farmstead offers a variety of amusements from a lovely farmstall, to a series of small craft shops, a popular cheesery and three eateries ranging from a coffee shop through to a sushi bar. There's loads on offer for kids from camel rides to cart rides, face-painting, horse-riding, the petting farm yard and even a snake park. This is

unashamedly touristy but it makes for a great place to spend an hour or two which the kids will love...

The horse-riding is only for older kids (12 years upwards) and caters to all abilities with outrides (approx 1.5 to 2 hours) on the beautiful Noordhoek Beach. Pre-booking is essential.

Opening Hours: 9am to 4pm Daily

Age Range: All ages

Price Range: Low. Different attractions cost small amounts. Nothing too expensive except the horse-riding which is for older kids only.

Contact details: 021 783 4545 or www.imhofffarm.co.za

Cape Peninsula Lighthouse in Cape of Good Hope Park

This windswept park of rolling hills with its stunning coastal views is a must-see for most visitors to Cape Town and provides a focal point for a family day out. Depending on how energetic you are, you can walk the final 20-25 minutes uphill to the lighthouse (10-15 minutes on the way down) or you can opt to take the Flying Dutchman funicular railway up to the viewpoint.

It's very busy in season so we recommend booking ahead for lunch at the Two Oceans Restaurant (Tel 021 780 9200/info@two-oceans.co.za).

Why not take the low road and take the steep walk down (and back up again) to the old lighthouse. Here you will get away from the crowds and enjoy some stunning mountain and ocean scenery. It shouldn't take you more than an hour in total.

If you have time you can also pop into the Cape Point Ostrich Farm which lies very close to the entrance of the Park.

Opening Hours: *Park: 6am to 6pm from Oct to March; 7am to 5pm April to September. Funicular train, restaurants & shops are only open from 9am to 5pm*

Age Range: *All ages*

Price Range: *OK*

Contact details: 021 780 9010 | <http://capepoint.co.za/>





Simonstown Warrior Toy Museum

Simonstown is a charming little town on the Cape Peninsula, which has been a naval base for over 200 years. It served as a Royal Navy base until 1957 when the town was finally handed over to South Africa. The area around Jubilee Square has many interesting shops, street vendors as well as a statue of Just Nuisance, a great dane adopted by the Royal Navy who would kindly lead drunken soldiers back to their club! It's worth a stop here for something to eat and to visit the charming little Toy Museum which has a permanent display of 4,000 model cars, 500 dolls and teddy bears. Miniature dolls houses, two fully functioning railway sets, and lead soldiers are on display. It's like going back in time to how we all used to play as kids before social media!

Opening Hours: 10am to 4pm Daily

Age Range: 6 to 12 years

Price Range: Low.

Contact details: 021 786 1395



Swimming with African Penguins at Boulders Beach

This is one of those semi-secrets. Yes the best sightings of the colonies of penguins are at the official Boulders Beach Penguin Colony site (which is next to the beach). BUT if you park on the southern side of the colony ie if you are coming from the Cape Point National Park, you can also pay a small fee to enjoy Boulders Beach. The penguins can and do swim around from the 'marine park' to swim in and out of the boulders so that you can swim with the penguins.

Of course, we do recommend that you also visit the Marine Reserve to see the penguins en masse for the best photography.

Opening Hours: 8am to 5pm from Oct to March; 9am to 5pm April to Sept

Age Range: All ages

Price Range: Moderate

Contact details: 021 786 2329, 1 Kleintuin Road, Simonstown, www.sanparks.co.za



Thank you!

Spectacular by Nature, Personal by Design

This Cape Town Guide with Kids was created by Cedarberg Africa, specialist safari operator

We'll design an individual safari just for you so that you get the family safari you've always dreamed of. But without wasting hours of precious time navigating the endless possibilities. If you're looking for an authentic and magical safari experience, Cedarberg Africa can help you.

Have questions? Schedule a time to chat or email us at:

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