

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP ▶ The name says it all

Located high above Wilderness' 5km (3mi) stretch of pristine beach is the boutique hotel *Views*. The hotel's glass exterior and its blue, white and beige interiors mean that it blends perfectly into its beach front setting → p. 36

INSIDER TIP ▶ Out of Africa

Get kitted out for your African safari at Port Elizabeth's *Melville & Moon* – one of South Africa's best suppliers for the great outdoors → p. 46

INSIDER TIP ▶ Half-price sundowners

Take advantage of the Table Mountain special – cable car rides are a half price bargain at sunset in the summer months (photo right) → p. 53

INSIDER TIP ▶ Born to be wild

Let your hair down and hire the latest in bikes from *Harley Davidson* in Cape Town and book your biker tour for anywhere in the country → p. 103

INSIDER TIP ▶ Sea view

Get some of the best Indian Ocean views at the small *Beach House* B & B in the world famous surfers' paradise of Jeffrey's Bay. Make sure that you ask for the corner guest bedroom on the first floor → p. 47

INSIDER TIP ▶ Simply delicious

One of Cape Town's top chefs, Franck Dangereux, owns and runs the country-style *Foodbarn Restaurant* in the leafy and quiet suburb of Noordhoek where he serves up unpretentious but top class cuisine → p. 53

INSIDER TIP ▶ In vino veritas

Doolhof wine estate near Paarl produces excellent wines and visitors can also stay over in the manor house → p. 63

INSIDER TIP ▶ Candle craze

The *Kapula Gallery* in Bredasdorp sells colourful candles with African designs → p. 58

INSIDER TIP ▶ Party in Jozi

With its glass décor, *Randlords* – a glitzy nightclub located on the 22nd floor of an office block in downtown Johannesburg – has fast become the latest hotspot for the city's trendy in-crowd → p. 86

INSIDER TIP ▶ Gourmet getaway

Take time out and treat yourself to some peace and tranquility with a stay at the *Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse* in the majestic Drakensberg. There are crystal clear river streams, waterfalls, mountains and memorable five-star fare served every evening → p. 79

INSIDER TIP ▶ Pedal power

Steep descents down Table Mountain: only for daredevil mountain bikers → p. 100

INSIDER TIP ▶ A hotel true to its name

Downtown Johannesburg is undergoing a revival: try the ultra-modern and very affordable *Lamunu* which means 'orange' in seSotho → p. 86

INSIDER TIP ▶ Tee off in the wild

For a rather unique sporting experience try the *Hans Merensky Golf Course* where elephants and giraffes make up the spectators → p. 102

INSIDER TIP ▶ Malaria-free in the bush

There are a number of draw cards for the expansive state-run *Madikwe Game Reserve* in the North West Province (bordering on Botswana). It is in a region with an incredible diversity of species, it is malaria-free and it is never crowded as day visitors are not permitted and the number of guests it plays host to at any given time is limited to 300 (photo left) → p. 93

INSIDER TIP ▶ A powerhouse stay

The old power station on Knysna lagoon has recently been converted into the *Turbine Hotel*. The boutique hotel is an eclectic mix of industrial design and art – its old industrial machinery is under heritage protection → p. 42



BEST OF ...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Glistening diamonds*

Documenting the exciting era of the diamond rush is the *Big Hole and Kimberley Mine Museum*. Whereas there is an admission charge for the former, entrance to the museum is free. Several thousand genuine diamonds can be viewed in the *diamond vault* → p. 38

● *Giants of the deep*

The small coastal town of *Hermanus* is renowned as a whale watching venue. Every year between June and December hundreds of whales from the Antarctic converge in the bay and can be viewed from the shore — a very special sight — and it's free (photo) → p. 61

● *Climb up Table Mountain*

Its fascinating flora and breathtaking views make the free three-hour hike up the front of Table Mountain unique — start several hundred metres past the cable car base station on the demarcated *Platteklip Gorge* hiking trail → p. 53

● *Priceless*

The *Tatham Art Gallery* in Pietermaritzburg displays some excellent contemporary South African and international art. Admission is free of charge and on Wednesdays there is the added bonus of a concert → p. 78

● *Bloemfontein on foot*

Not only does a hike through the *Franklin Game Reserve* introduce you to the flora of the region, but it will also take you past giraffes, buck and other wild animals — all for free → p. 102

● *Flora and fauna for free*

The *Garden Route* is famous for its abundance of indigenous fauna and flora and there are lots of signboards with informative facts. Conservation and research are a priority so there is no charge → p. 32

● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

ONLY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Unique experiences

● *Golf – the people's sport*

In South Africa golf is not a luxury sport. As space is not an issue even the smallest towns have at least a nine-hole golf course. Wear whatever takes your fancy — only the big city clubs have a dress code. You will find the highest density of golf courses in George on the Garden Route where the *Fancourt Estate Club* lies in an area of outstanding natural beauty → p. 35

● *The perfect wave*

Surfers rate the small town of *Jeffrey's Bay* near Port Elizabeth as the best surf spot on the African continent. Here they can catch the perfect wave at the Super Tubes break (photo) → p. 47

● *Nothing paltry about this poultry*

South Africans are known for their love of meat, especially big steaks prepared on a *braai*. For the more health conscious, ostrich meat is becoming increasingly popular — the meat is tasty but low in fat and cholesterol. Visit the *Cango Ostrich Farm* in Oudtshoorn to learn more → p. 36

● *A sunset to remember*

Sundowners are an institution in South Africa so what better place to enjoy yours than on top of the *Franschhoek Pass*. With views across the valley almost as far as Cape Town and a bottle of your favourite regional wine in hand — life is beautiful → p. 59

● *A journey through time*

The *Basotho Cultural Village* in the Free State will give you first-hand insights into how the Basotho have lived for centuries. The mountains that separate South Africa from Lesotho are their home and here visitors get to meet the chief, try the home brew and make the acquaintance of a sangoma → p. 70

● *Under the old oak trees*

Dorp Street in Stellenbosch takes you back in time to how South Africa was in the first decades after the Cape was colonised. The oaks in this street are listed and carry special significance for the town's student population — superstition has it that if an acorn falls on your head you will pass your exams → p. 64



ONLY IN

THE PERFECT ROUTE

Experience multi-faceted South Africa with a journey from Johannesburg to Cape Town

MODERN METROPOLIS AND CULTURAL VILLAGE

1 **Johannesburg** → p. 83 is a city abuzz with boundless energy and drive, multiple lane motorways and wild motorists, skyscrapers and sprawling townships. This, the commercial capital of Africa, is the perfect place to start your road trip. As soon as you leave the outskirts of this megacity and head north on the R 26 you will have the great expanse of Africa ahead of you. Three hours later you will reach the 2 **Golden Gate Highlands National Park** → p. 70 where imposing sandstone cliffs shimmer golden in the sunlight. Pay a visit to the 3 **Basotho Cultural Village** → p. 70 where members still live as they did 100 years ago.

ARTISTS' VILLAGE AND TRADITIONAL KINGDOM

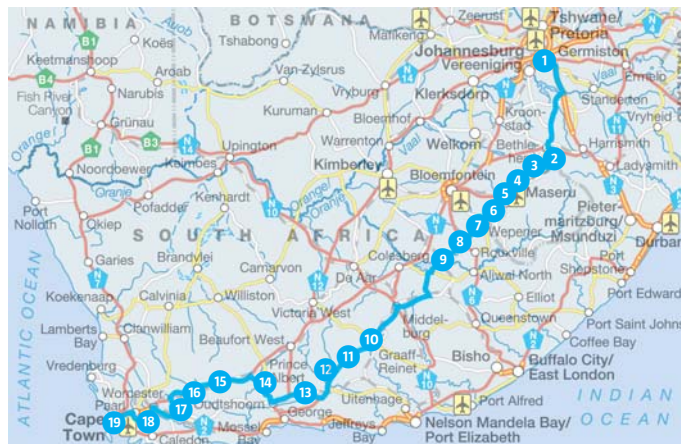
A few kilometres on you will reach the village of 4 **Clarens** → p. 70. It has become very popular over the past few years among people seeking an alternative lifestyle. Be sure to set aside enough time for a visit to a few art galleries followed by a delicious lunch at Clementine's. Continue your journey on the R 26 to 5 **Ladybrand** → p. 71, a town on the border of 6 **Lesotho** → p. 71 which is also known as the 'kingdom in the sky' (photo left).

RURAL TOWNS AND NATIONAL PARKS

The R 701 takes you to the country's largest dam. The 7 **Gariep Dam** → p. 33 has become popular with international windsurfers for its ideal conditions. *Forever Resorts* right by the water's edge is your best bet for an overnight stay. Continue your journey on the R 390 in the direction of 8 **Cradock** → p. 37, a small town with a number of renovated Victorian homes where you have to stop for a drink at the *Victoria Hotel*. Pass the 9 **Mountain Zebra National Park** → p. 38 (photo right) and you will reach 10 **Graaff-Reinet** → p. 36 and at *Gordon's Restaurant* you can treat yourself to their excellent lamb dish. Before continuing with the journey, pay a visit to 11 **Camdeboo National Park's** → p. 37 *Valley of Desolation* to see its impressive rock formations.

THE KAROO

Continue on the N 9 until a right turn takes you on the R 341 to the town of 12 **Oudtshoorn** → p. 36 the capital of the ostrich farming region. Visit



one of the ostrich farms and sample an ostrich egg omelette. Next, the R 328 will take you over one of the country's most impressive mountain passes to 13 **Prince Albert**, a sleepy Karoo village with enchanting hotels and guest houses perfect for an overnight stop. Continue your trip on the N 1 national road. After three hours you will reach 14 **Montagu**.

WINE ESTATES AND THE MOTHER CITY

From here take the R 60 via 15 **Worcester** → p. 94 until it veers left to the R 43. Continue on the R 43 via 16 **Villiersdorp** → p. 94 situated on the 17 **Theewaterskloof Dam** → p. 94 and pass through the Elephant Pass with its spectacular view of the Franschhoek valley. Two excellent restaurants *La Petite Ferme* and *Haute Cabrière* are located along the route. 18 **Franschhoek** → p. 58 is right in the heart of the Cape wine lands and is considered to be South Africa's culinary capital. From here the R 45 takes you past the wine estates and just before you get to the motorway on-ramp in the direction of Cape Town you will come across one of the country's oldest wine estates: *Babylonstoren*. Continue on the N 1 for another half an hour and you will finally reach 19 **Cape Town** → p. 49, South Africa's oldest city, the *Mother City*.



1400km (870mi). Driving time: 18 hours.
Recommended duration of journey:
one week. Detailed map of the route
on the back cover, in the road atlas and
the pull-out map