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48 HOURS: CAPE TOWN

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Table Mountain. Image: South Africa Tourism

South Africa's city by the sea has everything from nature to world-class cuisine and history, says Olivia Greenway

With an average of eight hours of sunshine every day and the oceans of the Atlantic and the Indian either side, Cape Town is the perfect place for those looking for a city break by the sea. Get an adrenalin rush by kitesurfing from its wide sandy beaches, or eat at

world-class restaurants with an abundance of locally sourced food. Add first-rate hotels, the superb Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, the vibrant V&A Waterfront, and it's hard to imagine what could be lacking.

However, it's impossible to visit Cape Town without touching on the legacy of apartheid and a visit to Robben Island, where political prisoners were incarcerated, will help visitors to get a handle on its past.

The city is fairly compact and walking around it is a real joy, so remember to bring some sensible shoes. Energetic souls can hike to the summit of Table Mountain, or sit in its shadow and people-watch on the Waterfront, sample local delicacies in Woodstock, explore the museums in downtown Government Avenue or enjoy a sundowner in chic Camps Bay — you'll not find a shortage of things to do in two days.

Try to catch a restaurant or show with live music. The city is perfect for a first-time visitor to South Africa, but beware, it's addictive — you'll want to come back.

Day 1

Morning: Housed in the slightly down-at-heel suburb of Woodstock, The Old Biscuit Mill is a fascinating market crammed with local food goodies such as ostrich burgers, milk tarts and koeksisters (syrup-coated doughnut). All around are craft shops and knick-knack shops. Saturdays are best, 9am to 2pm. theoldbiscuitmill.co.za

Afternoon: Although you can hike up Table Mountain, most people take the cable-car, which rotates through 360 degrees so everyone gets to see the fabulous views. tablemountain.net

Evening: The V&A Waterfront is a dynamic harbourside hub with scores of restaurants, museums, cinemas and shops. Live street entertainment adds to the atmosphere. waterfront.co.za

Day 2

Morning: Take a half-hour ferry trip to Robben Island to see where Nelson Mandela was held for nearly 27 years. The prison is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and former inmates give tours, offering a fascinating insight into South Africa's apartheid past. robben-island.org.za

Afternoon: Situated on the slopes of Table Mountain, the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens are crammed with indigenous species and offer incredible views of the city. sanbi.org/gardens/kirstenbosch

Evening: Make a beeline on a weekend night to the West End Jazz Club if you're a serious jazz fan. Featuring live South African and international artistes. Cine 400 Building College Road, Rylands. T: 00 27 21 637 9132.

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