Scenic Beauty

No matter which part of the country your clients wish to visit, they can be assured of being within easy reach of dramatic vistas that are a photogenic feast for the eye.

Table Mountain

Cape Point

Drakensberg

Clarens

Cango Caves, Scenic Cape Route 62, Oudtshoorn 6620, Western Cape
Cape Point

This scenic spot lies within a wild, unspoilt nature reserve with deserted beaches, craggy cliffs and wildlife such as antelope and baboons.

For tourists, it’s the notion that you are standing on a promontory at the foot of Africa that makes a visit here unique (even though the true southernmost tip of Africa is at Agulhas, about 150km to the south-east).

Advise your clients to set aside a day for this sightseeing trip, and use the opportunity to circumnavigate the Cape Peninsula while taking in other notable sites on route, like the African penguin colony at Boulders Beach, which also falls within the Table Mountain National Park.

Visitors can access the old lighthouse on top of the major peak at Cape Point via a funicular. They can also walk the path to the lower peak with its newer lighthouse, which still beams out a warning to ships rounding the Cape of Storms, so named by the 15th-century Portuguese explorer, Bartolomeu Dias.

Did you know?

Visitors can access the old lighthouse on top of the major peak at Cape Point via a funicular or by taking the stairs.
Travel fact
Cape Point lies within a wild, unspoilt nature reserve

Travel tip
Be sure to visit Boulders Beach en route to Cape Point, a location famous for its African penguins.

Table Mountain

Travel tip
When doing a trail or walk, advise clients to do so with an experienced guide.
This is easily done if your clients catch the cableway to the top. On a clear day, they will enjoy spectacular views across the city centre and Table Bay, down to the beaches of the Atlantic seaboard and south towards Cape Point.

With its unique vegetation and magnificent scenery, the mountain is popular with hikers. There are some 900 trails here, ranging from short walks to more challenging climbing routes. The most epic of these is the Hoerikwaggo Trail, an iconic four-night, five-day hiking trail laid out for 75km along the length of the mountain chain (and booked through the Table Mountain National Park).

However, advise your clients that they should endeavour to hike only in the company of an experienced guide, as parts of the mountain can be treacherous.

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**Travel fact**

If there’s one thing most visitors to Cape Town want to do, it’s set foot on the top of Table Mountain.

**Travel fact**

The Hourikwaggo Trail is a popular choice for hikers: it is 75km long and can be booked via the Table Mountain National Park.

**Travel tip**

If your clients are in Cape Town between November and the end of February, advise them about the Sunset Special, where visitors can enjoy half-price return tickets to enjoy the sunset from the top of the iconic mountain.

**Travel tip**

When doing a trail or walk, advise clients to do so with an experienced guide.
The 56m-high falls provide for wonderful photographic opportunities from the numerous well-maintained walkways and viewing platforms that have been installed here.

Advise your clients that the best time to visit is during the cooler months from April through to September to avoid the fierce heat of summer. However, the falls are most likely to be in full spate towards the end of the summer rainy season from February to April.

Visitors to this area can enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, rafting and game viewing. There are also many panoramic viewpoints, such as Echo Corner and Moon Rock, where they can alight from their vehicle to take pictures.

It’s best to visit these spots early in the day or in the late afternoon to avoid the intense heat of this area and to maximise photographic opportunities.

**Travel fact**

The best time to photograph the Augrabies Falls is at dawn or dusk

**Travel tip**

Activities in the Augrabies Falls area include hiking, mountain biking, rafting and game viewing

**Did you know?**

The magnificent Augrabies Falls are within the Augrabies Falls National Park in the Northern Cape. Image courtesy of Pascal Parent

**Travel tip**

The Augrabies Falls are 56m high, and provide wonderful photo opportunities. Image courtesy of Erwan Deverre

*uKhahlamba / Drakensberg*
In Zulu, uKhahlamba means 'barrier of spears', a reference to the craggy peaks that separate South Africa from the neighbouring mountain kingdom of Lesotho.

It’s here you’ll find the highest peaks in southern Africa, among them Champagne Castle (3 377m) and Giant’s Castle (3 315m). Needless to say, this makes the Drakensberg popular with hikers, climbers and adventurers.

On the lower slopes, there are gentler pursuits to keep visitors entertained, from horse riding to indulging in a relaxing spa treatment at one of the many hotels to be found here.

Keen birders and wildlife photographers might wish to arrange a visit to one of the vulture hides at Giant’s Castle and Cathedral Peak, where they can get close to endangered species like the bearded and Cape vulture.

And those interested in culture and history could ask to be taken on a guided hike to view the rock art for which this area is also famous.

**Travel tip**

This area of exceptional scenic beauty is well worth putting on any tourist itinerary, especially for those who love outdoor activities. Image courtesy of Panorama Paul

**Did you know?**

In Zulu, uKhahlamba means 'barrier of spears', a reference to the craggy peaks. Image courtesy of Simon Falvo

**Travel tip**

Those interested in culture and history could ask to be taken on a guided hike to view the rock art for which this area is also famous

**Panorama Route**

This route starts in earnest in the town of Graskop and skirts the edge of the northern Drakensberg escarpment, offering several stops where they can take in the stunning views over the 26km-long Blyde River Canyon.
This canyon is one of the largest in the world and, unlike the Grand Canyon in the United States and Fish River in Namibia, is unique for its forested slopes.

Popular viewpoints include God’s Window (10km outside Graskop), where there is a car park, curio stalls and from where, on a clear day, visitors can see a large part of the Lowveld all the way to the Kruger National Park.

Another popular stop is Bourke’s Luck Potholes (36km from Graskop at the start of the canyon), so named for the scoured-out rock formations in the river below.

But the most iconic of all is the Three Rondavels (53km from Graskop), offering a view of the three distinctive dolomite columns that rise up out of the canyon and the Blyde Dam.

**Travel tip**

If your clients are planning a trip to the Kruger National Park, encourage them to incorporate the scenic Panorama Route into their itinerary.

**Travel fact**

Popular viewpoints on the Panorama Route include God’s Window; Bourke’s Luck Potholes; and the Three Rondavels.

**Did you know?**

The Three Rondavels are also known as the ‘Three Sisters’

Image courtesy of Jono Hey

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**Cango Caves**
Did you know?
The nearby town of Oudtshoorn is famous for the farming of ostriches

These caves were the first tourist attraction in South Africa to enjoy formal protection after the governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, passed legislation as far back as 1820 to stop visitors from damaging or removing the incredible stalagmites and stalactites that can be found here.

Only a portion of this limestone wonderland is open to the public, and to protect the formations, only limited numbers of people are allowed into the cave at one time, so booking is essential.

Other facilities at the caves include a restaurant featuring an ostrich menu, a curio shop and an excellent interpretive centre that puts into perspective the immense timescale that created this beautiful cave system.

Feature image courtesy of Jorge Aguayo

Clarens
Did you know?
**Nearby Clarens is the Ash River, renowned for being one of the best white-water rafting locations in South Africa**

It’s an easy three- to four-hour drive from Johannesburg, Durban or Bloemfontein.

Here a community of artists has claimed the historic sandstone buildings, set against a mountain backdrop, as their own. The scenic outlook and the town’s many art galleries, antique shops and cosy restaurants have put Clarens on the map.

The town has also developed something of a reputation as an adventure centre, offering the best white-water rafting in the country on the nearby Ash River. Visitors can experience the outdoors on horseback, by hiking or even by abseiling down the sandstone cliffs characteristic of this area.

A further drawcard is that Clarens is only about 20km from the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, which gets its name from the rock formations that take on a special hue in the light of the setting sun.