

Overview:

A specialist garden tour to the Cape including private gardens and nature reserves. Our garden tour itinerary combines a series of formal garden visits, including some of the Cape Town's premier private gardens, an introduction to the phenomenally rich natural fynbos vegetation and many of the Cape's best loved attractions.

The variety of different garden styles combined with the richness of the local plant life, the spectacular settings and the privileged input from local garden owners, horticulturists and botanists results in a comprehensive and well-rounded presentation of the Cape's finest gardens.

The spring months of late October and November are generally the best time of year for garden visits in the Cape.

Itinerary:

Day 1 Cape Town

On arrival to Cape Town board a private coach for a driven, scenic, city orientation tour en route to your hotel. Check in and afternoon at leisure or join an optional afternoon visit to Groot Constantia – a premier historical Cape Dutch homestead and wine estate. In the early evening gather for pre-dinner drinks, a welcome address and an introductory lecture on the history of South Africa followed by dinner at the hotel.

Day 2 Cape Town

Ascend the dramatic Table Mountain via cable car. This World Heritage Site is home to more plant species than the whole of the UK. Enjoy a guided walk and an introduction to the local flora and admire the beautiful panorama of the whole peninsula spread out before you. Continue to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. Established in 1913, Kirstenbosch is home to nearly 7,000 species of indigenous plants, nearly 1,000 of which occur naturally within the area. After free time to peruse the shops and for lunch, enjoy an introductory talk on the Cape Floral Kingdom and a guided walk through the fynbos and cycads in these famous gardens.

Day 3 Cape Town

Scenic drive to Cape Point Nature Reserve via the spectacular Chapman's Peak drive. Stand at the Cape of Good Hope and enjoy a guided walk through the indigenous flora before driving to Cape Point. Picnic lunch at the reserve. Spectacular scenery and hundreds of indigenous plants await you. En route back to Cape Town stop at Boulders Beach to view the Jackass penguin colony and visit Simon's Town - the historical winter anchorage for the 18th century seafarers and their ships. Enjoy a private evening of art and wine with a paired dinner at Rodwell House, home to one of the finest, private, South African art collections. The evening will be hosted by the owner, Robin von Holdt - also one of South Africa's foremost wine experts.

Day 4 Cape Town

A day dedicated to spectacular garden visits starting at a private garden in Constantia. With an owner who is passionate about garden design this long and narrow space has been developed into a stylish feast for the eye with fountains, gazebos and lavender walks in a lovely setting of established trees and nearby vineyards. Continue to the nearby Cellars Hohenort for a guided walk through the award winning gardens with the resident designer and horticulturist, after which lunch will be served. In the afternoon visit a beautiful, historic 18th Century Cape Dutch private homestead set in one of the Cape's best loved gardens. Each 'room' or section is designed with a different mood in mind, but always to give a sense of peace and serenity to the person walking through it. Tour the garden with the owner and enjoy refreshments.

Day 5 Cape Town

A full day at leisure to explore some of the many attractions on offer in Cape Town: the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, the shops, galleries and markets and maybe visit famous Robben Island, enjoy a scenic helicopter flight or simply relax and unwind at your hotel.

Day 6 Stellenbosch

After check out visit an 'Old Cape' cattle and wine farm set on the slopes of the Tygerberg Hills. Tour the recently restored 1920's garden with the owner and enjoy the postcard view of Table Mountain and Table Bay. Continue for a tour of the historic town of Stellenbosch, know for its beautifully restored Cape Dutch and Victorian buildings, oak lined streets and prestigious university. It is also the heart of the Cape Winelands. This afternoon visit two of the finest, private, family owned adjoining estates in South Africa, famed for world-renowned wine and magnificent gardens in a sublime setting. Tour the two gardens with the owner, followed by tea with your hostess under the oaks. Late afternoon check in to your Winelands hotel, where later that evening, dinner will be served.

Day 7 Stellenbosch

Drive via the scenic coastal route to Fernkloof Nature Reserve close to Hermanus. One thousand, four hundred and seventy four plant species have thus far been collected and identified at Fernkloof. Join a local expert for a guided walk through the prolific indigenous flora and enjoy the spectacular views over Hermanus to the ocean beyond. After lunch in Hermanus enjoy time to view the Southern Right whales that come in abundance to Walker Bay to calve and to breed at this time of year. En route back to Stellenbosch stop to visit a spectacular private garden in the heart of apple-growing country. A true plantsman's garden, it contains a host of rare plants from all over the world including the largest collection of heritage and species roses in South Africa. Tea will be served and the owner will guide you around her garden.

Day 8 Stellenbosch

Start the morning with a visit to a fabulous private garden near Stellenbosch – indigenous planting in an idyllic setting of towering mountain scenery, stretches of sparkling water and old established trees. Tour the garden with the owner. Refreshments will be served. Board the coach for the picturesque drive through magnificent mountain and vineyard scenery to the village of Franschhoek – the 'restaurant' capital of the Cape. Lunch at leisure and time to browse the shops, boutiques and

galleries of the village. Afternoon visit a small private garden on the outskirts of Franschhoek. Demonstrating clever indigenous planting and design, your host is one of South Africa's best known landscape designers and horticulturists, his garden having featured in the 2008 BBC program 'Around the World in 80 Gardens'.

Day 9 Stellenbosch

Visit one of the Cape's most famous and beautiful, historic estates - Vergelegen. Listen to an historical overview of uproar and intrigue defining over three hundred years of history before joining the resident horticulturist for a tour of the magnificent gardens. The garden tour is followed by a private tour of Vergelegen's spectacular cellars and a tasting of some of its award winning wines, consistently rated as some of the best in South Africa. After lunch at the Lady Phillips Restaurant tour the beautiful 17th century gabled homestead. In the early evening board the coach for the drive to a private Cape home and enjoy 'Old Cape' hospitality, champagne and canapés with the owners, your hosts, in the pretty garden surrounded by magnificent mountain and vineyard views stretching all the way across to False Bay, Table Mountain and the setting sun. After sunset a farewell dinner will be served in a local restaurant.

Day 10

Day at leisure or in the V&A Waterfront for some last minute shopping and visits before a final transfer to the airport where you board your flight home.