

Five of the best safaris in and around Cape Town



By [Brittany Hawkins](#)

5 Apr 2018

I'm sipping on a glass of delicious sparkling wine with the sun beating down on my skin. Rolling green hills and vineyards surround me and just 20 minutes ago, I was driving past grazing giraffes, zebra, and enormous kudu. In another 20 minutes, I'll be enjoying an organic, locally sourced steak before being surrounded by rare birds of prey. If this not the perfect day, then what is?

For visitors to South Africa, there are many experiences that top the bucket list – things that tourists imagine when they arrive at this picturesque land. Sitting atop Table Mountain, swimming with the penguins at Boulders Beach, and tasting wine in one of the Cape's countless lush vineyards.

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Did you know - Gondwana was made with love: Read about how 2 people on different continents fell in love and followed their dream of starting a game reserve. <https://goo.gl/REXJz4> . . . #christmas2017 #countdowntochristmas #safari #meetsouthafrica #christmastime #christmascheer #KhakiFever

A post shared by [Gondwana Game Reserve \(@gondwanagr\)](#) on Dec 10, 2017 at 12:33am PST

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But what is a trip to South Africa without a safari, right? There's a reason that people associate Africa with images of

golden sunsets and open-top drives through the wild. Cliché though they might seem, it is true that a safari should be on top of every adventurer's to-do list. Nothing can compare to being immersed in an animal's natural habitat.


And while most visitors will travel further afield for the iconic wildlife safari experience, what many don't know is that you don't need to go far from Cape Town to tick this incredible experience off your bucket list. There are beautiful nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries just a few hours drive from the Mother City and they are sure to fulfil your safari dreams.

Here are five of the best:

Villiera Nature Sanctuary

The Game Drive Safari experience at [Villiera](#) is the perfect option for those who are short on time, as this stunning wildlife sanctuary is only a 30-minute drive from Cape Town. Together with its neighbours, the Villiera Vineyards in Stellenbosch set aside 220ha of land as a wildlife sanctuary in 2009. A number of wild animals now call the land their home, including giraffe, wildebeest, zebra, springbok, and eland.

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Elevate your wine tasting experience with a game drive safari at Villiera! #BubblySafari #VillieraWines
Booking is essential - call (+27) 21 865 2002 More info on our website [👉 link in bio.](#) . (Image cred
Johnathan Stewart) . . . #winery #sparkling #sparklingwine #wine #winepairing #nougat #sallywilliams
#stellenbosch #gamedrive #villiera #vilierawinery #villierawines #mcc #weekendvibes #weekend
#southafrica #bubbly #bubbles #wineroute #winetasting

A post shared by [Villiera Wines \(@villierawines\)](#) on Jan 9, 2018 at 8:20am PST

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visitors can take a full-day tour for the unique experience or combining a safari with a wine tasting on the vineyards. After enjoying a two-hour game drive to see the sanctuary's wildlife, you will taste a variety of delicious wines on the estate before heading to the Eagle Encounters rehabilitation centre, where you can get up close and personal with rare birds of prey. The centre has a touching gallery and features a magnificent falconry display.

This safari experience is perfect for families, as kids will love seeing all the animals, from the wildlife during the safari, to the wild birds and even crocodiles at the local crocodile farm. The kids can even enjoy a juice tasting while you sip on your sparkling wines.

Buffelsfontein Game and Nature Reserve

Another conveniently close reserve is [Buffelsfontein](#), less than an hour out of the city. This reserve was once a cattle farm and is now home to some of the most majestic wildlife the country has to offer, including lion, rhino, buffalo, cheetah and giraffe.

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#throwback I spotted a lone #giraffe wandering out of the forest. Its height reaches 7 metres tall. That makes my height barely level with its knee. This animal could be very dangerous at times so we'd be careful in approaching it. Anyway, happy #worldwildlifeday! #safari #wildlife #africa #southafrica #capetown #photooftheday #instaoftheday #fujifilm #xm1 #nofilter

A post shared by [Bayu Adi Persada \(@adipersada\)](#) on Mar 3, 2015 at 11:22pm PST

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If you'd like to make a weekend of it, the nature reserve has charming, budget-friendly cottages that are set right next to the animal's watering hole, so you can enjoy your morning coffee right alongside these beautiful animals as they quench their thirst.

Aquila Private Game Reserve

If you have a bit more time and are ready for a short road trip, definitely check out the spectacular [Aquila Reserve](#), located just two hours from Cape Town. The four-star park offers half-day or full-day tours and can even accommodate the more adventurous for an overnight safari.

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Such a fun pic! Thank you @travelfafrica.tv 💎💎

A post shared by [Aquila Safari](#) (@aquilasafaris) on Mar 5, 2018 at 7:30am PST

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This enormous conservancy will also give visitors the amazing opportunity to see the Big Five in their natural habitat, as it is home to the rhino, elephant, lion, leopard, and buffalo. While all five of these species were once on the brink of extinction in the Western Cape due to hunting, they have been reintroduced to the area and spotting any one of them is a truly remarkable experience.

You can make the drive to Aquila and spend the day before heading back to Cape Town, or you can treat yourself to the reserve's luxury accommodation and make a weekend trip of it. Aquila Game Reserve also has a Rescue and Conservation Centre, which provides sanctuary to animals that can no longer survive in the wild.

Invedoorn Game Reserve

Another great option for a quick drive from Cape Town is the [Invedoorn Game Reserve](#) in the Klein Karoo. The reserve offers vast, stunning views of the surrounding land and you can spot the Big Five roaming around in their element. You can make this a day trip but if you opt to spend the night, you can enjoy the incredible experience of a sunrise walking safari, where you'll hear all the nearby wildlife at their most active time of day.

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120 km per hour of cuteness and teeth! #cheetah #africa #southafrica #safari #animal #wildlife
#nature #cute #cat #feline #nyc_explorers #worldnomads #igersdubai #nikon #nikond5
#nikonphotography #travellord

A post shared by [Phil Sykes](#) (@philsykes3) on Apr 9, 2017 at 7:14am PDT

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A factor that sets Invedoorn apart is their Cheetan Conservation Centre, where you get the once-in-a-lifetime chance to see these beautiful creatures up close and personal. Under the supervision of the big cats' handlers, some of them will even allow you a quick pet!

Gondwana Game Reserve

If you're happy and willing to drive just a little bit further afield, you should absolutely head to the luxurious [Gondwana Game Reserve](#) for a weekend that will take your breath away.

Gondwana is the only fynbos reserve in the world to have the Big Five roam freely and the local flora and fauna alone make the drive worth it. There are grasslands and hills as far as the eye can see, all covered in beautiful local vegetation.

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It's that time of year again when we count down to Christmas and this year we will be bringing you 24 interesting facts about Gondwana Game Reserve accompanied by beautiful photos taken on the reserve. Let the Festive season begin! Did you know : Gondwana welcomed it's very first first guest in December 2008? <https://goo.gl/7Xvm6N> #christmas2017 #countdowntochristmas #safari #meetsouthafrica #christmastime #christmascheer #newbusiness

A post shared by Gondwana Game Reserve (@gondwanagr) on Dec 1, 2017 at 4:19am PST

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On your way to the reserve, you can stop by the coastal town of Mossel Bay and enjoy a seafood lunch by the ocean before spending the weekend at Gondwana in complete luxury. The reserve is surrounded by the awe-inspiring views of the Langeberg and Outeniqua mountains and has decadent spa facilities that you can indulge in after your safari, where you might catch sight of eland, giraffe, hippo, or any one of famous Big Five.

Given the abundance of wildlife safari options in and around the Western Cape, it is clear that travellers don't need to travel further afield to get the nature fix in South Africa. These amazing reserves are the perfect solution for those of us who fall head over heels for Cape Town and never want to leave!

ABOUT BRITTANY HAWKINS

Providing authentic, immersive, and exclusive travel experiences in the Western Cape. Seeking to disrupt and innovate the travel industry.

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