

What to do in the Garden Route for every month of 2020

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The Garden Route in the Western Cape is the perfect place to unwind during short breaks, long weekends and family holidays.

If you're planning on heading to the region but not quite sure when you want to go? The Cape's Garden Route event calendar is here to help you out.



January

With most South African schools opening their doors in mid-January, it's the perfect opportunity for child-free couples to enjoy a quieter Garden Route. The weather is fine (with average temperatures around 26 °C) – perfect for exploring the region's markets, beaches and hiking trails.

Mossel Bay's popular Dias Festival kicks off on Friday, 31 January. The festival, which celebrates the area's rich maritime history, is jam-packed with exhibitions and stalls, live entertainment, a beer tent, tea garden, arts and crafts markets, food stalls and a street parade.

February

Golf fans should head to Fancourt in George between 13 and 16 February for the annual Dimension Data Pro-Am, one of the most prestigious events on the Southern African Sunshine Tour. Played on The Links, Montagu and Outeniqua, it promises fantastic golf on three world-class golf courses. Follow your favourite players during the day, while enjoying unrivalled Fancourt hospitality at night.



The Wilderness Art Festival takes place on 27, 28 and 29 February. This unique event celebrates artists from across the Garden Route and Klein Karoo and includes an art walk, live music, arts and crafts stalls and a food market.

March

March is a bumper month on the Garden Route calendar with Knysna's Literary Festival set to wow audiences between 6 and 8 March with a diverse literary programme, including Moeletsi Mbeki, Pieter du Toit (Stellenbosch Mafia), satirical star Lesego Tlhabi aka Coconut Kelz, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng, Kgotsi Chikan, Peter van Kets and Mandla Langa.

If the KKNK (Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees) is on your bucket list (and it should be), make your way to Oudtshoorn between 23 and 29 March for the very best of Afrikaans theatre, drama, comedy, music, arts and entertainment.

April

There are lots to do on the Garden Route over the school holidays and Easter weekend. It's a beautiful time of year too – with mild autumn days lending themselves to boat trips, canopy tours, beach picnics and family adventures.



Base yourself at Fancourt for the holidays, as not only is the estate perfectly placed to explore the coast between Mossel Bay and Plettenberg Bay, it also has a fun, activity-packed kids programme, including its much anticipated Easter egg hunt. Even better? Fancourt's Easter special means that kids under 16 stay for free!

If you're planning to be in George at the end of the month, diarise Saturday 25 April for the Garden Route Airshow – a spectacular event incorporating high-performance aircraft and display teams from around the country. Funds raised will be donated to the Southern Cape Fire Prevention Association to provide training, support and equipment to the numerous Fire Prevention Units and Volunteer Groups in the Southern Cape.

May

May's Meiringspoort Challenge is an awesome event for trail runners and mountain bikers alike. Tackle the Meiringspoort Pass while enjoying the incredible scenery and warm Karoo hospitality in the beautiful dorp of De Rust. The event takes place on 23 May with entries opening early in January – don't miss out!

Or for something completely different, make sure you are in Knysna from 7 to 10 May for South Africa's leading motorsport lifestyle event, the Simola Hillclimb. Attracting competitors, spectators and broadcast viewers from around the globe, the event promises lots of smoke, noise, excitement and adrenaline-fuelled entertainment of the highest order!

June

The Garden Route's gay pride celebration, the Pink Loerie Mardi Gras and Arts Festival is back and more fabulous than ever. Join the festivities in Knysna from 12 to 16 June. Expect fun, music and the ever-popular street parade.

Winter on the Garden Route has become synonymous with the Knysna Oyster Festival. Taking place between 26 June and 5 July, the festival includes big events such as the Knysna Cycle Tour and the Knysna Forest Marathon and Half Marathon, but it's also chock-full of fun runs, kids' activities, live entertainment, guided walks and much more!



Knysna Oyster Festival 2019 celebrates 34th anniversary with new look

15 Mar 2019



July

The Garden Route Botanical Garden in George offers free entrance into the garden every third Saturday of the month. Gather friends or family for a picnic or explore the garden's many walking and hiking trails. It's located right next to the Outeniqua Nature Reserve and houses the Southern Cape Herbarium, an Indigenous Nursery, the Getafix Garden Cafe and the Garden Route Environmental Education Centre.

Keen South African golfers can tick off their ultimate sporting bucket list by playing three of South Africa's top 15 golf course at Fancourt: The Links (1), Montagu (8) and Outeniqua (14).

August

The Klein Karoo Klassique is the second annual arts festival hosted in Oudtshoorn during the year. Another must-do experience, Klassique has become *the* stage for South Africa's most accomplished classical musicians and the festival celebrates their talent along with local art, delectable cuisine and fine wine. It's the perfect way to wind down winter on the Garden Route.

September

Redberry Farm's annual strawberry festival kicks off the September school holidays on a scrumptious note. Enjoy a day out in George, pick fresh strawberries, browse market stalls and enjoy live music and plenty more. A highlight on the calendar, the delightful strawberry festival is a sure sign that spring has arrived on the Garden Route.

October

And if you are escaping to the countryside in Spring 2020, consider a drive up to the scenic Sunday's River Valley in the Eastern Cape for the annual Addo Rose Fayre. Taking place on Saturday, 10 October this lovely, local community event promises boutique stalls, good food, arts and crafts, entertainment and exquisite roses.

November

Summer is here and the Garden Route is beckoning. Get a taste for life in the Eden District by visiting Knysna's Leisure Isle Festival, chilling out at Mossel Bay's MosJazz festival or browsing George's Christmas Night Market. It is a special time of year and nothing says 'school's out!' quite like the Plett Rage Student Festival.



December

The Garden Route is the perfect place to spend the festive season. There are plenty of outdoor activities and adventurous pursuits to keep the family entertained and the Cape's long summer days couldn't be more perfect for pottering around Christmas markets or exploring the Garden Route's exceptional wine estates.

Kids of all ages will love the Eden Kite Festival (with events in George, Sedgefield and Knysna), nature lovers can enjoy a programme of birding and biodiversity talks at the Garden Route National Park, while Fancourt's Carols by Candlelight evening is the perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit.

There is polo galore at the Plett Polo Club, with end-of-season events and a one-of-kind pony parade. Join the well-heeled and finely dressed at Kurland Estate for the Plett Polo Festival at the end of December for an altogether different experience.

Alternatively, strip down to your cozzie, grab a float and head off to nearby Island Beach Bar on the Keurbooms River. Their annual float day is the perfect chance to chill out and enjoy the last few hours of 2020.

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