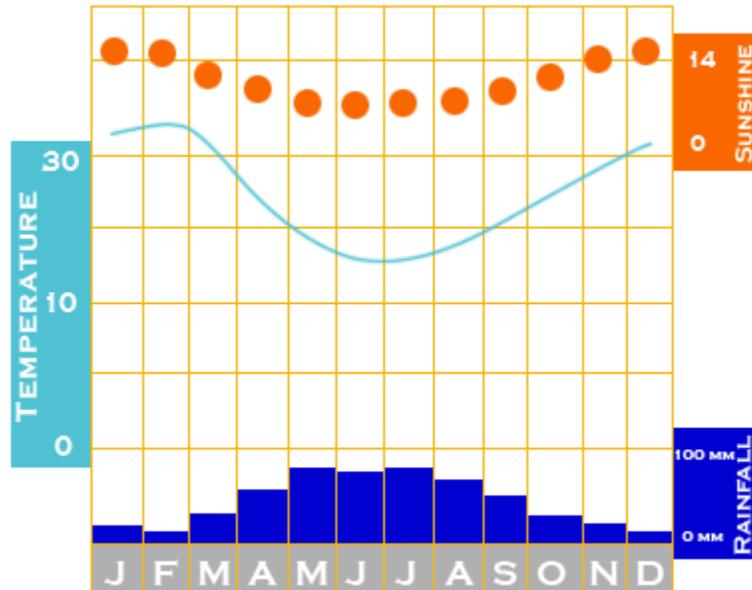


Cape Town Weather & Climate

Cape Town Weather and Climate (Temperature and Rainfall)

Lying between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, Cape Town enjoys mild winters and pleasant summers. Summer temperatures in December to February range from around 15 to 27 degrees Celsius (60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit), whilst in the winter months of June to August average temperatures are between 7 to 20 degrees Celsius (45 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit). Rainfall is moderate throughout the year and there are refreshing sea breezes which can sometimes turn a little bracing during the winter.



Seasons

Most tourists visit Cape Town during our long summer from November to February. A Mediterranean climate with little rain, 11 hours a day sunshine or more and long sunny evenings sets a party mood. The Californian weather explains why Cape Town has become a favored site for foreign film and TV crews escaping from the Northern Hemisphere winter.

In recent years, the normally prevailing summer south-easter wind, the famous Cape Doctor, seems to have abated. Maybe El Nino or global warming is to blame. If the wind does blow and you are after a tan

or the beach, remember that mornings are usually much less windy, and that certain beaches (Clifton, Boulders) are much more protected than others.

Conventional local wisdom used to be that spring (September and October) and autumn (April and May) are the smart times to visit Cape Town. They are usually balmy in-between seasons, with little wind, when nature is at its showiest. If you are into flowers or whale-watching, or seeing the vineyards at their best, these are great seasons to be in the Cape.

Although Cape Town winters have a reputation for rain and wind, they often produce perfect days or even weeks. Some climatic change seems to have reduced winter rainfall, and when it's not raining, winter becomes a perfect green season, when temperatures can reach a summery 26C (80F) or higher. Capetonians watching the World Cricket Cup being played in England in June regularly enjoyed temperatures and weather much more suitable for cricket here than they were there. This time is known in Cape Town as the "Secret Season" - because of all the secret pleasures to be experienced!

Whatever season you have chosen to visit Cape Town, be warned of the old joke. Cape Town has four seasons - sometimes in the same day. This is especially true if you plan to go hiking or be outdoors. Check the weather forecasts in local papers, on radio or available on www.weather.iafrica.com

South African summer holidays (usually from the first week of December to mid January), and Easter are peak periods for visiting Cape Town, so you should plan trips reasonably in advance, and be prepared for lots of company. Cape Town Restaurants are full and many visitors from upcountry book them weeks before arriving in Cape Town.

The Cape Doctor

The prevailing spring and early summer wind, the South-Easter (otherwise known as the "Cape Doctor") arises as a spin-off from anticyclones deep in the Southern ocean. It arrives at the peninsula by way of False Bay, its velocity often being given a boost by the "corner effect" round Cape Hangklip.

One arm of the South-Easter sweeps around the eastern flanks of Table Mountain, where its moisture, picked up from the ocean and the warm waters of False Bay, helps to keep the vegetation green through

the heat of summer. It is also a vital factor in the pollination of many plants, including the Silvertrees. The South-Easter continues on around Devil's Peak, before descending on the city.

There, it behaves somewhat in the manner of a trapped tiger, careering around in the bowl between mountain and sea. A couple of days of this is enough to purge the city's air - nowadays it is the smog instead of the plague of old which is banished. The South-Easter tends to overdo the cure, outstaying its welcome. A possible record was its performance in November 1936, when it howled without a break for 15 days, ravaging suburban gardens and penning the staff in the upper cable station for 5 days.