

Your Garden Route Guide

by Ed Berry [Cape Town Travel Adviser](#)



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The Garden Route is really worth exploring

Beaches, gorges, forests & headlands

Book a 4 day guided [Tour of the Garden Route](#)

Follow the **N2** motorway east out of Cape Town over Sir Lowry's pass towards the Indian Ocean coast and on towards [Port Elizabeth](#) and you'll discover an abundance of Cape flora, scenic rolling hills, rocky gorges, green forests, quaint historic towns on sandy beaches, and many opportunities to watch [whales and dolphins](#) frolicking in the waves.

Places to see on your Garden Route Tour

Swellendam is a historic town situated on the N2 motorway 240km from Cape Town. It is a good base for tours to the Southern most tip of Africa - Cape Agulhas, the [De Hoop Nature Reserve](#) and trips to the semi desert regions of the Klein Karoo. [Accommodation in Swellendam](#)

Heidelberg is situated at the base of the Langeberg Mountains about 3 hours from Cape Town. It is known as the Gateway to the Garden Route and contains many buildings of historical interest. The nearby [Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve](#) offers beautiful fynbos, animals and bird watching.

Witsand is considered the 'Whale Nursery' of South Africa. It is situated at the mouth of the Breede river and borders the [De Hoop Nature Reserve](#). Between May and November each year the Southern Right whales congregate offshore to mate and calve. The region offers some of the best [whale watching](#) in the world.



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Riversdale lies beneath the Langeberg Mountain Range on the N2 about 300kms from [Cape Town](#). It is a charming country town renowned for its hospitality and mountain scenery. It is also a popular adventure centre for hiking, 4x4 trails, outdoor activities and excursions to nearby seaside towns. The area is known as the 'Floral Paradise' of the Garden Route due to its many varieties of indigenous plants. [Accommodation in Riversdale](#)

Stilbaai is renowned for its abundance of indigenous flora and white sandy beaches. It also offers [whale watching](#) and a variety of sports facilities. The area is considered a major **archeological** site and home to 3000 year old historical artifacts. You could also visit interesting local farms and townships. [Accommodation in Stilbaai](#)

Albertinia not far from Riversdale along the N2 is known for its thriving business industry combining dried flowers and reed thatching, as well as ochre and clay mining, and aloe sapping factories used for producing health products. The Albertinia region contains unique varieties of Cape fynbos plants. It provides a friendly environment for birdlife, beautiful natural areas and attracts many nature lovers. [Accommodation in Albertinia](#)



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[Mossel Bay](#) is a harbour town widely well known as the "bay of Attractions" It is situated midway between [Cape Town](#) and [Port Elizabeth](#) flanked by long scenic sandy beaches. Plenty of entertainment to be had in and around [Mossel Bay](#) ranging from museums and boat rides to game viewing and extreme adventures. [Accommodation in Mossel Bay](#)

[George](#) is one of the **premier** business destinations in the Southern Cape. It is connected by road, rail and air to most centres in South Africa which makes it a useful point of departure for your Garden Route tour and other surrounding areas. If you enjoy **golf**, [George](#) is the place to be. You'll find a world famous course at the Fancourt Estate as well as a number of informal short golf courses. Another point of interest well worth visiting in the town is the **Outeniqua** Transport Museum which is known for its replica of an old station. There are also many hikes and mountain bike trails to experience in the nearby mountains. [Accommodation in George](#)

About 18 km from [George](#) is the beach resort of **Herold's Bay** which is popular for its whale watching, fishing spots, swimming and rock pools. It is also a sought after holiday destination. [Accommodation in Herold's Bay](#)

Victoria Bay is a charming bay about 9km from [George](#). It is known as the 'gem of the Garden Route' Popular with surfers, snorkelers, hikers and whale watchers. Really worth a visit. [Accommodation in Victoria Bay](#)



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[Wilderness](#) - at the heart of the Garden Route, is the holiday playground of this well travelled coastal region. This area is renowned for its rugged mountains, forest and sandy beach scenery, and friendly hospitality from the locals. Among the adventure attractions **Wilderness** has to offer are hiking, sailing, paragliding and water skiing. There are wildlife sanctuaries, horse riding, whale viewing and the Outeniqua steam train to [George](#) - or simply enjoy walking or lazing on the sandy beaches.

[Accommodation in Wilderness](#)

Sedgefield is a seaside holiday town situated between [George](#) and [Knysna](#). Apart from long stretches of smooth sandy beaches, Sedgefield is famous for its variety of indigenous plants. It also provides many attractions and adventure pursuits to its visitors. Watersports such as yachting and wind surfing are available, and there is also golf, horse riding and hiking trails through the surrounding areas.

[Accommodation in Sedgefield](#)

[Knysna](#) is a beautiful historic holiday town at the heart of the Garden Route - probably South Africa's favourite. It is situated on an estuary flanked by indigenous forests. The name 'Knysna' is understood to have come from the first Khoi inhabitants of the region and thought to relate to the forests or the distinctive rocky outcrops known as the Heads which are situated at the entrance of the estuary to the

sea. Among activities which are pursued in [Knysna](#) are mountain biking - you'll find some of the best routes in the country, paragliding and deep sea fishing.

[Accommodation in Knysna](#)

[Plettenberg Bay](#) is a popular upmarket Garden Route holiday resort. It has wide expanses of white sandy beaches and is well known for its diversity of marine life including dolphins and whales. Nearby is the [Robberg Nature Reserve](#) which offers whale viewing, hiking and an archaeological cave site.

[Accommodation in Plettenberg Bay](#)

Tsitsikamma Forest This region is not to be missed if you want to experience the scenic essence of the Garden Route. You'll find a vast expanse of indigenous 'fynbos' with forested mountains and rocky gorges extending along a wild coastline with sandy beaches. the [Tsitsikamma National Park](#) conserves the coastline and the marine resources. The region is a paradise for adventure seekers with activities such as tours, hikes, 4x4 trails and bungi jumping off the Storms River bridge. [Storms River](#) is the main town in the region. [Accommodation in Storms River](#)

[Oudtshoorn](#) is situated about 50 kms. from [George](#) on the edge of the 'Little Karoo' the vast inland semi desert region. Although it is not on the **Garden Route** proper it is worth a mention because of the attractions in the area. [Oudtshoorn](#) is mainly known for its cultural history, its ostrich farming industry and for the nearby [Cango Caves](#), one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. The town is surrounded by mountains which means that all access roads are via scenic mountain passes. Another popular attraction is the annual **Klein Karoo National Arts Festival** held in April each year, which is a celebration of South African culture, art, music and food. [Accommodation in Oudtshoorn](#)



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