

Cape of Good Hope – the door to Paradise was left ajar!

The road from Cape Town to the Cape of Good Hope itself is very promising, you simply can't help pulling your car over to photograph the wonders you run across along the way (poor driver, he had to stop lots of times since the eight people I travelled with were very, very keen to take pictures, when it wasn't one, it was the other begging him to stop again and again for this and that place. Inside the car you could only hear: "awesome"; "OMG!"; "super duper"; "ooh"; and many onomatopoeic sounds which I have no idea how to spell!.)

Then when you are about to run out of breath, you get there. Just being there you are likely to agree with me that Cape of Good Hope is one of the most interesting places to be seen in the world. Its vegetation is stunning; you are astonished at every single spot you look at. When you think you have seen all it has to offer, bang! - you are even more surprised by another amazing landscape.

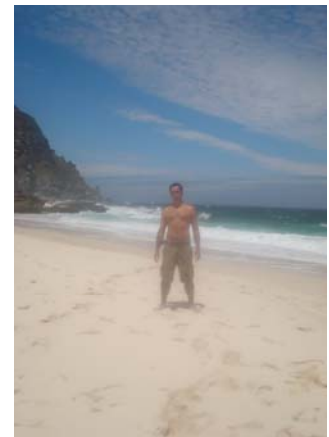
The cliffs are just superb from every single angle (bottom, top, side); please do stare at them in detail, just by doing so, you might see some birds nesting there. And from time to time you can watch the bird-parents leaving their nests in order to fetch their babies some food.

To reach the lighthouse top deck you may take the "Flying Dutchman Funicular", but I would highly recommend that you walk, so as not to miss all those glimpses on the way up (after all, walking is a tremendous exercise, isn't it?) The wind seems to be blowing you off the peak as you get there, you may feel as if you were in a wind tunnel. The only drawback is that you can hardly use your camera optical zoom (and it's very important), for there are those very special details that you would like to have a very close shot, but the wind makes this almost impossible.

All you have to do after walking all the way back down to the base is: take your time, eat something light, and drink a lot of water - then you'll be ready to go all the way down to the beach. Diving into that cold, crystal clear water is nothing but very rewarding; indeed - it's a life time experience

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Reginaldo enjoying the beaches at Cape Point

Into Africa : Tomohiro talks about his trip to Namibia

I love travelling. I've been to quite a lot of countries, like Indonesia, Cambodia, Greece, Italy and Poland ... but Namibia is definitely one of my favourite countries.

The reason why I decided to go there was to see the first sunrise of 2008 in the Namib desert, which has red sand, and is thought to be the oldest desert in the world. It is, I guess, a very Japanese custom, but seeing the first sunrise is quite important for Japanese people. On New Year's Day in Japan, some people go specially to sunrise-points like Mt. Fuji to watch the sun rise.

It was simple, but a long way, to go to Namibia. I took an "Intercape" bus from Cape Town train station, and it took 20 hours to Windhoek, the Namibian capital, and 6 more hours to Swakopmund – a city in the desert. It sounds a lo-o-o-ng time, but it wasn't so bad. I enjoyed seeing scenery which was totally different from what I usually see in my country, and talking with other people I met on the bus.

The sunrise was spectacular. I saw it in Sossvlei which is in the southern part of the Namib desert, 4 hours from Windhoek. Sossvlei has a very famous and popular dune called "Dune 45". The scenery which is made by the desert and the sunrise transfixed me, and made me feel "the earth".

On this trip, I didn't have enough time to go to Etosa National Park, Kaololand, Fish River Canyon or Moonlandscape. Why wouldn't I go back to this country again? I will!



Book Review
Hector's Journey
by Francois Lelord

Hector is a psychiatrist. In his consulting rooms, he spends a lot of time doing what he can do best: listening to people who are supposed to be happy, given their circumstances in life.

As Hector feels unable to make them happy, he himself becomes depressive.

This leads him to the decision to go on a journey to search for the secret of happiness. Travelling all over the world, he always asks the same simple question: "Are you happy?" While men usually feel amused, women normally start to weep. Anyway, Hector collects all the answers in his little notebook, and in the end, he realises that actually nothing is easier than real happiness.

Francois Lelord, the author of "Hector's Journey" and himself a former psychiatrist, wrote this novel in a surprisingly simple way. Hector's unaffected naivety offers a completely new perspective to the reader, even on topics of complex social concern, such as prostitution, poverty and drug addiction, and makes the main character of the novel loveable.

In the end, reading the story about Hector made me happy – I can really recommend this book to everyone who is looking for an easy-to-read, but at the same time, serious, book.

By: *Caroline*

**Wanna take part in a
Kissathon?**



In January 2008, the youth of South Africa is organising a 'kissathon' every weekend in shopping malls across the country. Why are they doing this?

In December 2007, the government amended the so-called 'sexual defence act' – a new addition to this act is that it is now forbidden for people under 16 to kiss each other! Can you believe this? I don't know the actual reason the government did this – and nor do the youth of South Africa. To protest against this senseless law, the youth wants to do the opposite of what the law intends: they want to kiss until their lips are aching – in public!!

So if you want to show sympathy with them: Just clean your teeth and take part in the kissathon. Enjoy the party.

By: *Thomas*

Surfing R.S.A. ...

Before I decided to come to South Africa, I've always had a dream of learning to surf.

While I was in Cape Town, I heard about Jeffrey's Bay, one of the 'Mecca's' of surfing in the world. So, with my brother and a friend, we chose to go there while the school was closed for Christmas and New Year.

We rented a car, and on the way to Jeffrey's Bay, we stopped to see the world's highest bungee jump. I unfortunately didn't have the guts to jump, but my friend did, and he seemed to really enjoy the jump.

After that, we went straight to Jeffrey's Bay, and when we finally got there, we found our backpackers and rested!

We were finally in Jeffrey's Bay and my dream was about to come true. We woke up early the next morning and went to the surf shops. There are lots there, with good stuff and good prices.

Surf board in hand, I was ready to learn. The first day was very cloudy and foggy and the water was freezing, but that didn't stop me from trying my first waves!

I was shocked after the first attempt – surfing wasn't as easy as I'd thought! But my desire to surf was bigger than the difficulty ...

I stayed in Jeffrey's Bay eight days – awesome days, with beautiful beaches, good weather and nice people. It was a great experience, learning how to surf and meeting new people.

Jeffrey's Bay is definitely a very good place to visit in South Africa!

By: Tiago

The Great White Shark

Since I watch Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*, when I was about 9, the image of a grey giant swimming monster became my mild obsession. After watching many Discovery Channel documentaries, and 3 shark posters in my bedroom, the trip to South Africa came up, and along with that, one certainty: I'll face the beast!

So: In South Africa: Everything is set up, and it's time to board. The boat is smaller than my stomach can stand and the two sea-sickness tablets that I've taken don't seem to work. I have no choice but to 'spill my guts'.

Now, feeling much better, it's my turn to jump into the cage. The first time I **see** the shark, is like the first time I flew on a plane: my body just doesn't want to know how to react to such a different feeling – a strange mixture of fear, admiration and total enthusiasm.

A known fact about sharks is that they can detect the heart beats of their prey, so they know who is the most frightened, and therefore the easiest one to catch. If that's true, the second time I saw the shark, he must've wanted to eat my head! He's so close that it looks like he's going to enter the cage. This is the biggest shark we've seen so far – almost 4 meters, and he was just a few inches from me!

It felt like I was in one of the hundreds of movies I've seen about sharks.

Unbelievable! Unforgettable!

By: Joao

The Waterfront - A 'must' to visit

In 1860, a young prince initiated the construction of a pier supposed to protect visiting ships from the Cape's strong winter winds. That's how the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront area began. Nowadays it consists of a beautiful and elegant area, with a lot of bars and restaurants.

When you arrive there, you notice the place's welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Outdoor attractions like musicians, bands and street performers entertain the tourists all day, and make them feel that they haven't got to know everything the Waterfront can offer.

Even demanding people won't be disappointed with the posh stores like LaCoste, Diesel and Nike, located in Pier Victoria and its surroundings.

You can take boat tours that allow you to see some nearby islands and appreciate the famous Cape Town sunset from another point of view: the sea.

The Waterfront is definitely a must-go place. Its short distance from Cape Studies is an invitation to visit it on different days. You shouldn't miss that!

By: Felipe and Henrique

Awesome!

When I started to think of my travels, I was sure that I wanted to do bungee jumping. After two weeks of classes, my friends and I decided to do the Garden Route. I realized my dream would now be possible. Then, during my trip, after Christmas, I arrived at the bungee jumping destination, Storms River, the highest bungee jump in the world (216 m).

Although I was there I couldn't believe I had the courage to jump but my intent was bigger than my fear.

From the moment I arrived at the top of the bridge I became calm despite people's normal feelings of tension.

After two hours of waiting I was the next one in line and I didn't have time to be afraid. Two minutes later, strapped in, I went to the edge of the bridge, splayed my arms and dived into the abyss.....!!!

It was amazing! The best feeling ever. Yes, I'm still alive and everybody should try this experience once in their life!



Me - arms splayed - jumping!

Bv: Maria Izabel

I survived in Cape Town! FAREWELL from THOMAS

OK – I am still alive, but I want to tell you the true story: I almost doubled my weight and halved my I.Q.!

I arrived on 15th December 2007 early in the morning at the Cape Studies Residence. I was very tired because of the flight, and the last few very hard days at work. But, tired as I was, I was still able to realise that alcohol is NOT forbidden at the residence. There were a lot of empty – and a few half-full – bottles in the kitchen. The second thing I realised, after a short sleep, was that the noise level in the residence was similar to the plane I had just flown in taking off! So I thought: “If I don’t want to go mad, I have to join in the party!” So I did. I haven’t used the 15kgs of literature I brought with me to write some articles for my work (Have I mentioned that due to the maximum luggage weight of 20 kg, I brought only 3 T-shirts with me?!)

I did not do my daily sports exercises to avoid looking a little like Oprah, either.

BUT: I’VE ENJOYED MY HOLIDAY!



Residence Kitchen

In the mornings, I spoke with my teacher and the other guys in my class about interesting topics like politics, economics, religion, Tsunamis, the infinity of the Universe, Greek history and so on – with just a little grammar! (To Ann, Caroline, Pascale, Merts and Tomohiro: Thank you for that!)

Like everybody, I went to the well-known places: the Waterfront, the Sunset trip in a sailing boat, Kirstenbosch, the Wine Route, Long Street, Cape of Good Hope and several beaches.

My favourite was the walk up to the top of Table Mountain (Tip: If you want to walk, it’s easier to walk up, rather than down; stay until the sun goes down and then use the cable car). Also, as an absolute must, the concert on Sundays at *Ignite* in Camps Bay (see www.goldfishlive.com) (Thanks to Birgit!)

Just to say one sentence about the situation between the different South African races as I observe it: With reference to “*A Long Walk to Freedom*”, I would say “there are still many miles left to travel.



Waiting for sunset on Table Mountain

Tomorrow I have to go back to good cold Germany.

I hope I can at least partly retain the calm and composure I was reminded of while here on holiday.

There are many ways to be happy, and work is not everything. I will definitely recommend this trip to my friends and colleagues.

Have a good time
and please
send my best regards to the cockroaches!

