WESTERN CAPE  SOUTH AFRICA

OUTSHOORN & DE RUST

TOURISM

ADVENTURE
NATURE & WILDLIFE
ART & CULTURE
HERITAGE
KAROO CUISINE

TOURIST GUIDE
Oudtshoorn is situated approximately 450km from Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, and is the gateway to the Klein and Central Karoo. The area between the Outeniqua Mountains along the Indian Ocean in the south and the imposing Swartberg Mountains to the north embodies a rich botanical and cultural heritage. Once the capital of ostrich feathers, which led to the building of imposing feather palaces in the area, Oudtshoorn is still to a great extent dependent on the ostrich industry. The town has outdoor weather throughout the year, and the breath-taking beauty of the natural scenery, with snow-capped mountains in winter and a bouquet of wild flowers in summer, makes this the ideal holiday town for outdoor activities. Relax in the luxurious, uniquely styled Karoo hospitality, while enjoying traditional South African Cuisine with a modern twist.

Climate & Weather
It’s generally hot in summer and mild in winter with temperatures ranging from a minimum of 5°C (very unusual – most summer evenings are warm and balmy) and a maximum of 36.8°C in summer and a minimum of 0°C and maximum of 26°C in winter.

Getting to Oudtshoorn
- **By Air:** George Airport (55km): Domestic schedules & non-scheduled flights. 044 876 9310. Port Elizabeth (420km): Domestic scheduled & non-scheduled flights. 041 507 7379. Cape International (430km): Domestic scheduled & non-scheduled flights. 021 937 1200.
- **By Road:** 55km from George on the N12. 420km from Port Elizabeth on the N2 to George and then on the N12 from George. 450km from Cape Town on the N1 to Worcester and then on the Route 62 Scenic Route from Worcester. 430km from Cape Town on the N2 to Mossel Bay and then on the R328 from Mossel Bay.
- **By Bus:** Buses travel through Oudtshoorn at regular intervals, to and from all the major cities in South Africa

Where to Stay
Oudtshoorn offers a wide selection of accommodation options. Choose between accredited or Tourism Grading Council of South Africa endorsed establishments. Contact Oudtshoorn & De Rust reservations on 044 279 2532 for information or bookings. Visit www.oudtshoorn.com for online reservations or email info@oudtshoorn.com

Foreign Currency
Foreign currency may be exchanged at all major banks in town. Commission is charged on each transaction. Bank operating hours are generally 09h00 to 15h30 (Mon-Fri) and 09h00 to 11h00 (Sat). There is a foreign exchange desk at the Cango Caves.
The rich history of Oudtshoorn is told through the exhibits in the various museums:

**The CP Nel Museum Complex** is one of the best country museums in South Africa and the only museum with a synagogue inside which is still in use. The museum is housed in two historical buildings with the main Museum, named after a collector of antiques, in the former Oudtshoorn Boy's High School. This sandstone building with the prominent clock tower was designed by Charles Bullock and built in 1912, and declared a national monument in 1981. The theme of the museum is ostriches through the centuries and showcases the fascinating story of the ostrich feather industry.

**Le Roux Townhouse**, also designed by Charles Bullock, was built in 1909, and is a good example of a glamorous feather boom residence, featuring various architectural styles, period furniture and unique art nouveau stained glass panels.

**Arbeidsgenot**, a charming little museum that was the home of CJ Langenhoven, the composer of South Africa's first national anthem, a part of which is still contained in the new anthem.

Oudtshoorn (pronounced “oats - horn”), was named after Baron van Rheede from Oudtshoorn, who died in 1773 on his way to the Cape to become Governor, succeeding Ryk Tulbach, who had died the year before.

**Architecture**

During the boom of the Ostrich Industry from 1860 - 1914, much money was available and many churches, public schools and commercial buildings were built.

The farming community, that had suddenly become extremely rich, vied with one other to display their wealth and built magnificent “Ostrich Feather Palaces” decorated and embellished with stained glass windows, turrets and handsome cast-iron work (locally known as “broekielace” - cast-iron decorations that reminds one of the lace on ladies' underwear.)

Several of these “Ostrich Feather Palaces” are still to be viewed in Oudtshoorn and its immediate environment. The distinctive sandstone used for these buildings was readily available because it was locally quarried. The skill of the Scottish stonemasons, originally imported for the building of the Dutch Reformed Church (“Moederkerk” - Mother Church) is evident in these fine buildings.

A number of well-known architects such as Charles Bullock, George Wallace and J.E.Vixeboxse opened offices in Oudtshoorn and were responsible for the design of many Ostrich Palaces.

Collect a map from the Oudtshoorn Tourism Office and wander down memory lane, admiring these unique buildings that have stood the test of time.
Things To Do

4x4
Minwater Eco Adventures - 082 481 3625
Die Hel - 044 203 6300

Adventure
Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000
Cango Caves - 044 272 7410
Cango Caves Zip Line - 079 891 8248
Cango Wildlife Ranch - 044 272 5593
2Doorn Equine (Horse Riding) – 082 895 5009
Five Shy Meerkats - 084 772 9678
Skydive Oudtshoorn - 072 590 8336
Wilgewandel Holiday Farm - 044 272 0878

Art
Bottega Art Gallery - 044 272 6330

Beauty Spas
Boulders Lodge & Spa - 044 203 6300
Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000

Bird Watching
Gamkaberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300
Swartberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300

Bush & Game Safaris
Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000
Chandelier Game & Ostrich Farm - 072 742 4405

Crafts / Shopping
Cali Craft & Gems - 044 272 3530
See list of Ostrich products on pg4

Cultural Experiences & Historical Routes
Historical route in town - 044 272 7306
Ma Betty’s Xhosa Experience - 083 597 5289
Potskerf & Velskoen Shuffle (Heritage Walks) – 073 240 7898

Elephant Experiences
Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000

Food
See pg5 for a list of restaurants

Golf
Oudtshoorn Golf Course - 044 272 4201

Guided Tours
Karoo MTB tours - 082 772 5043
Jonga SA - 082 491 5301
Spore in die Suid-Kaap - 044 272 6893
Swartberg Mountain Tours (Half & Full Day Tours) - 079 105 4000
Swartberg Experience – 074 438 1408
True South Travel - 082 461 8253
Hiking
Cape Nature - Swartberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300
Cape Nature - Gamkaberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300
Minwater Eco Adventures - 082 481 3625
De Rust Voetslaan - 076 965 8888
Survil Boutiqe Olive Estate - 087 350 1950
Wilgewandel Holiday Farm - 044 272 0878

Landmarks / Heritage Site
Cango Caves - 044 272 7410
Swartberg Pass - 044 203 6300

Museums
Arbeidsgenot - 044 272 8600
CP Nel Museum - 044 272 7306
Le Roux Town House - 044 272 3676

Nature Reserves
Swartberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300
Gamkaberg Nature Reserve - 044 203 6300
Gamkaskloof Nature Reserve (Die Hel) - 044 203 6300

Ostrich Farms
Cango Ostrich Farm - 044 272 4623
Chandelier Game & Ostrich Farm - 072 742 4405
Highgate Ostrich Show Farm - 044 272 7115
Safari Ostrich Farm - 044 272 7311

Ostrich Products
Klein Karoo Ostrich Emporium - 044 279 2127
Lugro - 044 272 7012
Ostrich International - 044 279 1217

Routes
Circle Route via Swartberg Pass and Meiringspoort
Groenfontein Circle Route via Calitzdorp
Oudemuragie Circle Route

Shuttles & Transport
AB’s Call-A-Taxi, Shuttle Services & Day Tours - 078 172 9744
Gysman Transport - 073 688 6223
Silverfox - 082 291 6018

Wines
Grundheim - 044 272 6927
Doornkraal Farmstall - 044 251 6715
Karusa Vineyards - 044 272 8717

Waterfalls
Rust & Vrede Waterfall
Meiringspoort Waterfall
A region is almost always defined by its cuisine. Ostrich meat features on almost every menu - organic, healthy and tasty, almost every part of these birds is edible. Fillet steaks with a gooseberry and Amarula sauce, schnitzels, neck in a traditional bredie (stew) velvety liver pâté, ostrich heart in a red wine sauce and the stomach served in the same manner as ox tongue. Ostrich burgers, sausage and bobotie are popular, healthy and delicious. You will also find a variety of game dishes and dessert fruits such as pomegranates and figs. Roosterkoek (griddle cakes) baked on an open fire, served with a savoury filling or cheese, with a variety of home-made preserves, features strongly on breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. The sweetest, plumpest apricots, hanepoot grapes, peaches, spanspek and watermelon grace the streets, shop shelves and buffet tables, in season. Restaurants and Delis offer the best of local produce, intertwined with international staples as Japanese, Italian, Russian and French.

**Restaurants**
- 1965 Restaurant (De Rust) – 082 234 0852
- Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000
- Café Brulé - 044 279 2412
- Café-De-Move-On - 044 272 3831
- Cango Caves Estate - 072 214 4578
- De Oude Meul Restaurant - 044 272 7190
- Headlines Restaurant - 044 272 3434
- Herrie’s Restaurant (De Rust) - 044 241 2150
- Kobus se Gat - 074 438 1408
- Nostalgie - 044 272 4085
- Simzee Shisanyama - 078 709 1263
- Spur Steak Ranch - 044 272 3692
- Su Casa @ Surval - 087 350 1950
- The Colony @ the Queens Hotel - 044 272 2101
- Wilgewandel Restaurant - 044 272 0878

**Delis**
- Café Brulé - 044 279 2412
- De Rustica Olive Estate - 044 241 2177
- Surval Boutique Olive Estate - 087 350 1950
Wine
The Klein Karoo Wine Route is arguably the most diverse of South Africa’s wine regions and stretches along the Cape Route 62 from Montagu in the west to the Langkloof in the east.

The Klein Karoo is situated between spectacular mountain ranges and its vines are grown on high slopes and in the fertile alluvial soil along the river banks. The climate is generally drier than other wine regions, resulting in healthy vineyards, which are grown organically to a large extent. Various microclimates enable winemakers in the area to produce a wide variety of quality wines, including dry wines, fortified wines and brandies.

Visit one or all of the wine farms in the area:
- Calitzdorp Wine Cellar - 044 213 3301
- De Krans Wine Cellar - 044 213 3314
- Doornkraal Farmstall - 044 251 6715
- Grundheim - 044 272 6927
- Karusa Vineyards - 044 272 8717

Beer
Many beer drinkers are moving towards locally hand-crafted beers, and there are two such breweries in the area,
- Karusa – 044 272 8717
- Thorny Creek Brewery – 087 808 3323

Gin
Enjoy some delicious hand-crafted gin at the local brewery
- Grundheim - 044 272 6927
Oudtshoorn plays host to a multitude of Festivals and Events during the year and because of its excellent sporting facilities and amenities, many sporting codes choose Oudtshoorn to host their South African Championship games. Here are just some of the major events that take place annually:

**Attakwas Extreme Mountain Bike Challenge** is a 121 km race with a total ascent of 2900m from Chandelier Game farm in Oudtshoorn to Great Brak River. **(January)**

**Wesbank Leopard Crawl MTB / Trail Running** is a one day event taking place in the Klein Karoo. **(February)**

**Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees (National Arts Festival)** is held in Oudtshoorn in honour of the rich Afrikaans heritage in the area. The event celebrates diversity in the arts with cutting edge stage productions, a variety of music stages, as well as visual art that is a treat for the connoisseur. **(March / April)**

**Ostrich Crawl Mountain Bike & Trail Run** is held during the KKNK arts festival. **(March / April)**

**The 36ONE MTB Challenge** offers everyone who enjoys cycling a chance to participate in the ultimate single-stage mountain bike race in South Africa, a 361 km route in three days race to enjoy. **(April)**

**Meiringspoort Challenge** is a one day event taking place in the De Rust area, enjoy the beautiful trail run or the mountain bike routes. **(May)**

**Outeniqua and George Kennel Clubs Dog Show** with local and imported breeds competing to be the best on show. **(June)**

**Oudtshoorn Sports Festival**, where some 2 500 sportsmen and women gather in a festival over two weeks including almost every sporting code. **(June / July)**
Klein Karoo Klassique is a festival themed around music, mouth-watering food, great-tasting wine and eye-catching art. (August)

Annual Scale Fly-In (Cango Flying Club) model aeroplanes take to the skies over Oudtshoorn in this annual event. (September)

Meiringspoort 21 km and 12.5 km Road Race is run from the Great Karoo through one of South Africa’s most spectacular canyons and ending in the village of De Rust. (October)

Seweweekspoort Mountain Bike Challenge from Amalienstein through the Seweweekspoort - perhaps the most rugged and isolated of the passes through the Swartberg Mountains - to Ladismith and Seweweekspoort. 25 and 78 km route. (October)

Cape Pioneer Trek is a 7 day mountain bike stage race, traversing 2 mountain ranges, crossing the arid semi-desert Karoo and flowing through the coastal forests of the Garden Route coast. (October)

Dryland Traverse takes place in and around the Cango Caves and happens in three stages over 3 days. (November)

To Hell and Back Mountain Bike Race from De Hoek holiday resort near Cango Caves to Gamkaskloof (Die Hel) in the Swartberg Mountains; an overnight and return race - 60 km each way. (November/December)

The Eden Street Mile Series is the major Street Mile Series in South Africa and are hosted during the December holidays over three events in Oudtshoorn, George and Hartenbos. Visit www.edenmiles.co.za for more info. (December)
The quaint Little Karoo village of De Rust lies at the southern portal of the famous Meiringspoort, about 35 km from Oudtshoorn. It has a typical Karoo atmosphere, steeped in hospitality and time - time for well-being, time for each other and for some, time to become a human being again. In danger of becoming a ghost town a few decades ago, people have realised its beauty and potential and have flocked to buy property. The artists, writers and burnt-out businessmen have all made this beautiful village their home.

Activities in & around De Rust
- Meiringspoort and the Waterfall - seven scenic picnic areas are available
- Hiking Trails
- Mountain Biking
- Wine Tasting
- Stompdrift Dam Resort for fishing, water sports and leisure activities.
- Shop in one of the many ‘cute’ shops
- ‘Werk op Werf’ or WOW products are locally produced and creative
- Feather Palace

Where to Stay
De Rust offers a wide selection of accommodation options. Choose between accredited or Tourism Grading Council of South Africa endorsed establishments. Contact Oudtshoorn & De Rust tourism for reservations on 044 279 2532 for information or bookings. Visit www.oudtshoorn.com for online reservations or e-mail derust@oudtshoorn.com.

Our area is the biggest onion seed producer in South Africa
Swartberg Mountain Circle Route
(200km – 4-8 hours, depending on stops)
Depart from Oudtshoorn and travel along the R328 towards the Cango Caves. Choose to visit the Caves, stop at an activity on the way, or make your way directly up the majestic Swartberg Pass, towards Prince Albert. Stop as many times as you like along the way and drink from the clear mountain streams. Enjoy lunch in the historical Victorian village of Prince Albert, before returning along the R407 via Klaarstroom. Take a short hike to the Meiringspoort waterfall and enjoy the awesome rock formations in the ‘poort’. Browse the interesting stores in De Rust and return to Oudtshoorn via the N12.

To Hell & Back (4x4 only)
‘Die Hel’ is an isolated valley in the Swartberg Mountains between Oudtshoorn and Prince Albert. Although the valley officially falls in the Fynbos vegetation biome, one could be forgiven for thinking one was in moist savannah when in the valley. This is due to the fact that, although the valley itself receives a rather arid 200mm of rain a year, the surrounding mountains collect more than 1600mm of rain annually - all of which flows down into the valley. Accessible via only one (rather dangerous) 4x4-only road, the valley is very isolated, and is cut-off during the rainy season when the Gamka River comes down in flood. Once a remote farming community, the valley is now mostly owned by CapeNature and is a nature reserve.

Want to visit the beach?

George & Surrounds
Take the N12 to George via the Outeniqua Pass, and revel at the resourcefulness of the pioneers that carved roads through these imposing mountains. Stop at the 4-passes lookout for a bird’s-eye-view. Take the airport turn off and drive the Outeniqua Country Hops Route, where you can stop at game- and/or strawberry farms and try locally made Dutch cheese. Proceed to Herold’s Bay and enjoy the beach or relax in the shelter of the tidal pool. Take the N2 back to George and visit the Outeniqua Transport Museum – a ‘time travel’ through the rich history of transport in the area. Proceed along the N2 to Victoria Bay, world famous for quality surfing. Return up the N12, but take the alternative dirt road up the Montagu Pass, and back to Oudtshoorn.

Mossel Bay
Travel along the spectacular Robinson Pass to Mossel Bay, an historical town, first discovered by Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias in 1488. Explore the history, culture, and environment of Mossel Bay at the Dias Museum Complex, the Cape St Blaize Cave, or relax on one of the pristine beaches. After a delectable lunch, drive to the Great Brak River and back to Oudtshoorn.
If you enjoy luxury and sophisticated elegance, Surval Boutique Olive Estate will delight you. Savour the sights and sounds of Oudtshoorn from Surval, perfectly positioned on the Route 62. It is an exceptional working olive farm offering luxurious accommodation, fit for a king and his family. Encompassing 31 luxurious and individually decorated suites and bedrooms.

With a menu inspired by the produce of the local Klein Karoo region of South Africa, combined with international flair, our restaurant Su Casa (member of Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs) offers an elegant dining experience equal to none.

We invite you to a luxurious and exclusive world where time stands still, letting you savour every moment and leaving nothing to be desired.

CONTACT DETAILS:
076 256 3519 | reservations@surval.co.za | www.surval.co.za
Greater Oudtshoorn Area Map

Travel Distances

**Circular Route (Oudtshoorn - Swartberg Pass - De Rust)** 200km
- Cape Town > Port Elizabeth (R62) 950km
- Cape Town > Port Elizabeth (Coastal Road) 850km
- Cape Town > Oudtshoorn (R62) 450km
- Oudtshoorn > Port Elizabeth 400km
- Cape Town > Johannesburg (Flying Time) 2 hours
Greater Oudtshoorn Area Map

Western Cape Region

Travel Distances
- Cape Town -> Port Elizabeth (R62) 950km
- Cape Town -> Port Elizabeth (Coastal Road) 850km
- Cape Town -> Oudtshoorn (R62) 450km
- Oudtshoorn -> Port Elizabeth 400km
- Cape Town -> Johannesburg (Flying Time) 2 hours
The Cango Caves became a popular attraction during the 1800’s. Many visitors broke off stalagmites and stalactites and wrote their names on the walls. In response, the then governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, published the first Caves Regulation in 1820. It was designed to protect an environmental resource and banned the collection of souvenirs. Entrance to the caves cost the equivalent of six dollars, the modern equivalent of about R500. Many of the significant discoveries of the caves were made by the first full-time guide, Johnnie Wassenaar, who opened many of the side chambers and introduced thousands of people to Cango 1, which remains the only part of the caves open to the public.

The **Cango Caves** is a **cultural and natural landmark** in South Africa. The 20 million year-old **Cango Caves** system consists of a series of hidden chambers cut deep into a thick limestone rock layer. The caves are situated in the Swartberg Mountains, 30 kilometres north of Oudtshoorn, in South Africa’s Western Cape Province.

Choose from the Heritage (1 hour) or Adventure (90 min.) tour, each led by experienced, knowledgeable and accredited Cave Guides. Tours are offered in English but Afrikaans, German and other language guides may be available (please check guide availability when making reservations) - Tel: 044 272 7410

Cango Caves facilities include an Information Bureau, Auditorium, Interpretive Centre, Curio Shop & Restaurant.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Frequently described as one of the Great Natural Wonders of the world
- The biggest show cave system in Africa
- Inhabited since the Early Stone Age
- It is South Africa’s oldest tourist attraction
- Unique information: They would not have normally formed in this area and are a result of faulting
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reservations@cangocaves.co.za | www.cango-caves.co.za
Khoi & San People of the Region
The caves were known to indigenous people long before the Europeans landed at the Cape. Recent finds, such as tools left behind in ancient hearths in the cave mouth, prove that humans such as the Khoi have lived and sheltered here for at least 80 000 years. The entrance was used as a home by the San and the walls were painted with pictures of game animals. Over two hundred years ago, in 1780, a Khoi herdsman again stumbled on the entrance to the caves while searching for missing cattle.

Afrikaans Culture
Oudtshoorn is one of the founding homes of the Afrikaans culture and language.

The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstfees (translated: Klein Karoo National Arts Festival) is held each year in Oudtshoorn in honour of this rich heritage and one of the founding fathers of Afrikaans, C.J. Langenhoven. Langenhoven’s home, Arbeidsgenot, is a National Monument and an important historical stop during your visit to Oudtshoorn to experience the living story of Afrikaans:
• Learn about the history of Afrikaans.
• Learn more about the pivotal role Langenhoven played.
• Get the latest “sun-time” from Langenhoven’s sun dial.
• Meet Herrie the Elephant, Langenhoven’s imaginary pet elephant.

Xhosa Culture
Ma Betty’s traditional Xhosa Cultural Village is situated in the impoverished township of Bongolethu (translates to “our pride” in Xhosa). Experience traditional Xhosa activities, culture, cuisine, dance and storytelling during a visit to the Cultural Village. Resident women prepare authentic Xhosa meals in black iron pots on a traditional open fire. Traditional healers called ‘Sangomas’ (witchdoctors) throw bones to summon healing spirits. Xhosa songs and stories carry customs in harmony to an African beat.

The Jewish Community
The Jewish Community of Oudtshoorn was so strong that it was named, with some degree of exaggeration, ‘Little Jerusalem’ or ‘Yerushalayim’ beDerom Afrika’ (Jerusalem of South Africa). The CP Nel Museum is the only museum in the country with a synagogue inside which is still in use.
De Zeekoe

Oudtshoorn Luxurious Accommodation
History
The history and development of Oudtshoorn is inextricably connected to the growth of the ostrich feather industry from as early as 1860. By the turn of the twentieth century (during the Edwardian Period) the use of prime ostrich feathers in ladies’ clothing was high fashion, especially in England and Europe. Feathers were light and easily imported and fetched incredibly high prices. The resultant prosperity had a profound effect on Oudtshoorn and its immediate environment.

Ostrich Farms
Knowledgeable guides will lead you through all aspects of ostrich farming and tell you about the important role that these unique birds play in the daily life of Oudtshoorn:
- Cango Ostrich Farm - 044 272 4623
- Chandelier Game & Ostrich Farm - 072 742 4405
- Highgate Ostrich Show Farm - 044 272 7115/6
- Safari Ostrich Farm - 044 272 7311

Ostrich Products
The array of ostrich products available is amazing. Shop for feathers, leather, meat, “biltong” (dried meat), eggshells or feather dusters. Be it ostrich leather as an heirloom investment or simply fun gifts & curios you desire, you will find a full range of options available.

Ostrich Products
- Klein Karoo Ostrich Emporium - 044 279 2127
- Lugro - 044 272 7012
- Ostrich International - 044 279 1217

Look out for the many informal traders along the streets as well.

DID YOU KNOW? One ostrich egg weighs about 1,2 - 1,5kg and is equivalent to 24 chicken eggs.
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En Route To Cango Caves, Schoemanshoek, Oudtshoorn

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6,5km outside Oudtshoorn en route Cango Caves
Meet a Cheetah, dive with crocodiles, and encounter many rare and spectacular creatures along your path, including hogs, pygmy hippos and otters. Get close to big cats, and view lions, leopards and the Bengal Tiger. From reptiles to farmyard animals, the thrill never stops. Restaurant, kidszone and waterpark areas are also available at Cango Wildlife Ranch - 044 272 5593.

Meet wild Meerkats on an early sunrise tour, in their natural environment at De Zeekoe Reserve. Don’t forget to bring your camera! 082 772 96 78

Go on Safari at one of our Game Lodges or take a guided walk along a Khoi/San Trail at Chandelier Game Lodge & Ostrich Show Farm - 072 742 4405.

Experience Meerkat Safaris, Elephant Feeding, Walking & Brushing at Buffelsdrift Game Lodge - 044 272 0000.
Plant life
The vegetation in the area is remarkably diverse, featuring renosterveld, mountain fynbos, Karoo-veld, spekboom veld, and numerous geophyte species. Some species will be in bloom virtually throughout the year. Most plants flower in spring, but early autumn is the time that many protea species flower, attracting large numbers of sugarbirds and sunbirds. Many of the interesting plants on the higher Swartberg peaks, including the rare Protea venusta, are in flower during mid-summer (December - February). The ‘De Rust Koppie’ is of particular interest as many of the plants found here, are endemic, and exist only on this hill.

Animals
The succulent Karoo boasts a shy range of browsing antelope and the majority of animals are nocturnal, as is the case in arid and hot desert-like regions. At night, aardwolf, jackal, bat-eared foxes, owls, porcupines, hares, civets and genets claim back the veld. During the day, however, tortoises and other reptiles will be visible, alongside some meerkat and the odd klipspringer or grysbok. Other mammals likely to be seen include kudu, baboon, dassie and springbok (on the flatter areas at Gamkapoort). Leopard and caracal also occur in the area, but are seldom seen.

Being a vastly different and unique biome, the visitor should as a rule not expect the Bushveld or Lowveld savanna “Big Five” or large herds of gregarious game.

Birdlife
The Klein Karoo is an excellent area to see many of Southern Africa’s endemic bird species. The semi-arid lowland areas around Oudtshoorn can throw up endemics like Southern Black Korhaan, Cape Peninsula Tit and Rufous-eared Warbler, as well as a host of larks. Raptors are abundant, and range from common species like Pale Chanting Goshawk, Rock Kestrel and Jackal Buzzard to more unusual types such as Lanner Falcon and Black Harrier. More than 130 bird species have been recorded here, notably black, fish and martial eagle, Cape sugarbird and pied kingfisher.
Swartberg Nature Reserve
The Swartberg Nature Reserve lies in the Oudtshoorn district between the Great and Klein Karoo, forming a narrow, but long, stretch of 121 000 hectares, and is a proclaimed World Heritage Site. Besides conservation, the reserve is concerned with the conservation of mountain catchments and the water yield thereof, and educational and recreational opportunities. This area was clearly used by the San for many centuries, as evidenced by the numerous rock paintings and artefacts found in caves all over the reserve. During the 1700s European farmers arrived in the area, establishing small settlements and making roads. Three historic routes connecting the Great and Klein Karoo lead through the reserve: Toorwaterpoort is a train route; Meiringspoort is used by motorists; Seweweekspoort is a gravel road, and the untarred Swartberg Pass, built by Thomas Baines, takes one over the Swartberg and reaches a height of 1585m above sea-level. Gamkaskloof (Die Hel), which was first inhabited by farmers in 1830, was only accessible by foot until 1963 when a road was finally built into the valley.

Gamkaberg Nature Reserve
Near Oudtshoorn, the Gamka Mountain is an isolated mountain range in the Little Karoo, lying between the Swartberg and Outeniqua mountains. The name Gamka is derived from the Khoikhoi (‘Hottentot’) word gami, meaning lion. The reserve was established in 1974 in order to conserve a local population of endangered Cape Mountain zebra and their natural habitat. The terrain is rugged, with mountainous plateau incised by deep ravines. The main rock formations consists of Table Mountain quartzites and shales, and Bokkeveld sandstone and shales.

For more information see www.capenature.co.za

Geological Environment

Whichever way you go from Oudtshoorn you are bound to notice the road cuttings and hills made up from the red Enon Conglomerates. These are some of the youngest rocks around Oudtshoorn and were formed by fast flowing rivers flowing into fault bounded basins about 100 million years ago during the breakup of the supercontinent called Gondwana. These rocks can be seen at the beautiful Redstone Hills about 40km west of Oudtshoorn on the R62 to Calitzdorp. Table Mountain Sandstone is about 450 million years old and is part of the Cape Supergroup of rocks. It is very hard and forms all the mountains that bound the Klein Karoo. These are the Swartberg to the north as well as the Outeniquas to the south, the Kammanassie to the east and the Rooiberg to the west. All these mountains were formed about 330 million years ago by massive tectonic pressure which folded and uplifted the Table Mountain sandstone. If you travel north-west of Oudtshoorn over the magnificent Swartberg Pass or north-east through Meiringspoort you will see the incredible folding in these rocks.

The oldest rocks in the Klein Karoo, at about 600 million years, are the Kango Series. These are found in Schoemanspoort, north of Oudtshoorn on the R328. Here you will see massive, up to 2 metres thick, white quartz veins cutting through these ancient conglomeratic rocks. If you continue on this road you will come to the world famous Cango Caves found in a limestone which is part of the Kango Series. Paul Rixom - Geologist
South Africans are sports mad: the fortunes of our national rugby, cricket and soccer teams often determine our collective mood. Win or lose, most of us love to play sport, to talk about sport and to watch sport - and ‘Oudtshoornites’ are no different. The town boasts established athletics, bowls, tennis, squash, rugby, cricket and golf clubs (and golfers have a wide selection of some of the country’s top courses at George and Mossel Bay - both less than an hour’s drive away). You don’t have to visit a club to enjoy your sport in Oudtshoorn - the presence of many long, safe and interesting country roads make the Klein Karoo a natural choice for cyclists and runners.

The town presently boasts:
- 24 rugby fields
- 13 cricket pitches
- 54 tennis courts
- 2 Olympic long course (50m) swimming pools
- 3 Olympic short course (25m) swimming pools
- 1 synthetic athletics track
- 5 bowls courts
- 6 squash courts
- 1 x 18 hole golf course
- 7 badminton courts
- 9 volleyball courts
- 3 basketball courts
- 14 sports halls
- 6 hockey fields
- 14 soccer fields

Oudtshoorn’s two-week long, annual sports festival takes place in June/July each year. All possible sports codes and all age groups are included to create a festival of sports. For more information contact Ian Laubscher at laubscheri@oudtmun.gov.za or see www.oudtmun.gov.za for the latest news and programme.
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OUDTSHOORN & DE RUST TOURISM OFFICE:
80 Voortrekker Road, Oudtshoorn
Tel: +27 (0)44 279 2532
E-mail: info@oudtshoorn.com
Oudtshoorn Reservations: bookings@oudtshoorn.com

CANGO CAVES INFORMATION DESK:
Cango Caves
Tel: +27 (0)44 272 7410
Email: cangocaves@oudtshoorn.com

Important Numbers
Police: 044 203 9000
Ambulance: 044 203 3147
Hospital: 044 203 7200
Medi-Clinic: 044 272 0111
International Tourist Safety & Support: +27 (0)21 483 9434