

HISTORY OF WESTERN CAPE

In 1652 the first European settlement occurred in the Cape of Good Hope. This came into occurrence as part of the supply chain from the Dutch East Indian Company. When this colonial settlement was formed, slavery was used to help the build this establishment. In the 18th Century slavery became the economic backbone of the Western Cape Province.

However, in 1795 the British took over the Cape Colony and shortly afterwards slavery was stopped. This was a historical turning point in the history of the Western Cape as independence was given back to the slaves.

In 1910 the Western Cape became the legislative capital of South Africa. In 1945 industrialization and development occurred at full scale in this province. This attracted many black workers from the well-know townships of Guguletu and Nyanga. Western Cape is also home to Robben Island. This is where, in 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and helped the country become a non-racial democracy.





HISTORY OF STELLENBOSCH

The town was founded in 1679 by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel, who named it after himself – Stellenbosch means "(van der) Stel's Bush". It is situated on the banks of the Eerste River ("First River"), so named as it was the first new river he reached and followed when he went on an expedition over the Cape Flats to explore the territory towards what is now known as Stellenbosch. The town grew so quickly that it became an independent local authority in 1682 and the seat of a magistrate with jurisdiction over 25,000 square kilometers (9,700 sq mi) in 1685.

The Dutch were skilled in hydraulic engineering and they devised a system of furrows to direct water from the Eerste River in the vicinity of Thibault Street through the town along van Riebeeck Street to Mill Street where a mill was erected. Early visitors commented on the oak trees and gardens.

During 1690 some Huguenot refugees settled in Stellenbosch, grapes were planted in the fertile valleys around Stellenbosch and soon it became the centre of the South African wine industry.

In 1710 a fire destroyed most of the town, including the first church, all the Company property and twelve houses. Only two or three houses were left standing. When the church was rebuilt in 1723 it was located on what was then the outskirts of the town, to prevent any similar incident from destroying it again. This church was enlarged a number of times since 1723 and is currently known as the "Moederkerk" (Mother Church).

The first school had been opened in 1683, but education in the town began in earnest in 1859 with the opening of a seminary for the Dutch Reformed Church. Rhenish Girls' High School, established in 1860, is the oldest school for girls in South Africa. A gymnasium, known as *het Stellenbossche Gymnasium*, was established in 1866. In 1874 some higher classes became Victoria College and then in 1918 University of Stellenbosch. The first men's hostel to be established in Stellenbosch was Wilgenhof, in 1903. In 1905 the first women's hostel to be established in Stellenbosch was Harmonie.



Harmonie and Wilgenhof were part of the Victoria College. In 1909 an old boy of the school, Paul Roos, captain of the first national rugby team to be called the Springboks, was invited to become the sixth rector of the school. He remained rector until 1940. On his retirement the school's name was changed to Paul Roos Gymnasium.



GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Stellenbosch is 53 km (33 mi) east of Cape Town via National Route N1. Stellenbosch is in a hilly region of the Cape Winelands, and is sheltered in a valley at an average elevation of 136 m (446 ft), flanked on the west by Papegaaiberg (Afrikaans: *Parrot Mountain*), which is actually a hill. To the south is Stellenbosch Mountain; to the east and southeast are the Jonkershoek, Drakenstein, and Simonsberg mountains. Die Tweeling Pieke (Afrikaans: *The Twin Peaks*) has an elevation of 1,494 m (4,902 ft); the highest point is Victoria Peak 1,590 m (5,220 ft). Jonkershoek Nature Reserve lies about 9 km (5.6 mi) east of Stellenbosch, and the Helderberg Nature Reserve is about 23 km (14 mi) south via provincial route R44. Just south of the Helderberg Nature Reserve is Strand, a seaside resort town. The soils of Stellenbosch range from dark alluvium to clay. This, combined with the well-drained, hilly terrain and Mediterranean climate, prove excellent for viticulture. Summers are dry and warm to hot, with some February and March days rising to over 40 °C (104 °F). Winters are cool, rainy and sometimes quite windy, with daytime temperatures averaging 16 °C (61 °F). Snow is usually seen a couple of times in winter on the surrounding mountains. Spring and autumn are colder seasons, when daytime temperatures hover in the 20s.

CULTURE

Cape Town is a melting pot of people and cultures and the city's diverse heritage can be explored through its historical architecture and colourful cuisine. Get started here...

SAN

Although the San people were the original inhabitants of South Africa, they were systematically marginalised and eradicated by a series of colonisers. Sadly, not much of their rich heritage remains. However, 70km north of Cape Town, up the West Coast, you'll find the San cultural centre – !Kwa ttu. A visit to the replica San village will give you insight into how the San lived for millennia, and your guide will demonstrate how the San track animals, shoot with a bow and arrow, and use medicinal plants.

DUTCH

While there are plenty of architectural reminders of the Dutch colonisers around Cape Town, if you want to get a proper feel for the country's Dutch heritage, you should visit the second oldest town in South Africa – Stellenbosch. Here you'll find the Stellenbosch Village Museum. The museum precinct is made up of four houses – Schreuderhuis, Blettermanhuis, Grosvenor House and OM Berghhuis. Each house represents a different architectural period and is furnished and decorated accordingly. The guides, dressed in period costume, share stories and snippets of Stellenbosch's history.

CAPE MALAY

In the 18th century, the Dutch sent political exiles, slaves and convicts to the Cape from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and the Indonesian Archipelago. These individuals and their descendants became known as the Cape Malays and many of them eventually settled in the Bo Kaap. If you visit the Bo Kaap, you'll find not only the oldest mosque in the country – the Auwal Mosque in Dorp Street – and the oldest Muslim cemetery – the Tana Baru Cemetery – but also a museum dedicated to showcasing local Islamic culture and heritage. Housed in a building that dates back to 1768, this museum is known as the Bo Kaap Museum.

FRENCH HUGUENOTS

In 1685, when Catholic France did away with religious tolerance, hundreds of thousands of French Huguenots (who were Protestant) fled to neighbouring countries. Roughly 200 of those who fled to the Netherlands took up the offer of free passage to the Cape colony. The French Huguenots settled in what is now known as Franschhoek ('French Corner') and although French soon disappeared as a home language, the influence of the French Huguenots can still be seen in South African surnames and the strong tradition of winemaking. While you are in Franschhoek, visit the Huguenot Monument and the accompanying Huguenot Memorial Museum, which recognises the role these early settlers played in shaping the Cape.

BRITISH

You need look no further than Cape Town's V&A Waterfront to find physical evidence of British rule in the Cape, however, if you're after something a little more period specific, Bertram House, which is situated at the top of Government Avenue, is a good bet. This house, which was built by an English immigrant, John Barker, in 1839, is the only remaining example of the English Georgian-style red brick houses that were once common in Cape Town. The house, which was turned into a museum in 1984, is furnished to depict the home of a wealthy English family in the first half of the 19th century. Once you are done visiting the museum, take a stroll through the Company's Gardens. Although the Garden was initially set up by the Dutch, it was under British rule that a portion of the Garden was released as a public open space

SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBES

For a fuller picture of Cape Town's history – and the heritage of all her people – one needs to look beyond the historical buildings and stately wine farms. Under the apartheid government, various laws were passed to enforce racial segregation and to control the movements of those who were not deemed white. Because of these restrictions many black labourers were forced to leave their families and live in hostels on the outskirts of cities such as Cape Town in areas declared 'black areas'. Lwandle, situated near Somerset West, was established in 1958 and housed labourers who worked in the nearby fruit and canning industry. With the advent of democracy, most of the hostels in Lwandle were converted into more acceptable family abodes, but the community decided to keep one hostel – Hostel 33 – and turned it into the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum. Once you are done exploring the photographic and interactive installations at the museum, go on a walking tour of the township with one of the passionate local guides.

STELLENBOSCH WINE ROUTE

Stellenbosch holds the honour of being the most well-known town in South Africa. History, culture, natural beauty, sport, education and wine has made the name 'Stellenbosch' resonate around the globe as one of South Africa's premier tourist, wine, business and education attractions.

The recorded history of Stellenbosch dates back to 1679 when this name was given to a small island on the Eerste River by Simon van der Stel, the then governor of the Cape. It can, however, be assumed that prior to its official naming, the Stellenbosch surrounds were home to various indigenous communities.

The Eerste River, which today still ripples through Stellenbosch, was so named as this happened to be the First ('Eerste') river the Dutch settlers came upon after leaving their Cape Town base.

After its discovery, Stellenbosch was quickly identified as an area in which to settle, with great potential for agriculture. The surrounding areas proved rich in soil and correct climate for producing vegetables to sustain the ships passing by the Cape of Good Hope en route to the other Dutch colonies in the East.

Add to this the thirst of the Dutch and other settlers that necessitated the making good wine, Stellenbosch soon saw its hills and valleys also planted to vines along with other agricultural crops.

That skilled vintners were sent to the area and the vines bore wonderful fruit is proven in the fact that, to this day, Stellenbosch remains world-renowned for the quality of its wines, with the vine being by far the region's most prominent agricultural feature.

With the rich agricultural pickings, the early settlers soon established a bustling town. The earliest building in the Stellenbosch area dates back to 1689 and can still be viewed on the historic wine farm of Muratie. In the town itself, solid, white-plastered buildings arose and the streets were planted with oak trees, giving it the name Eikestad (Town of Oaks), which is still used to describe the town today.

Besides its rapid growth in becoming a centre for the flourishing wine industry, the foundations for Stellenbosch's heritage as an educational centre were laid in 1859 when a theological seminary was established. In 1918 a university was founded, and to this day the University of Stellenbosch remains an internationally recognized education centre and one of the leading universities on the African continent

Besides its status as a leading cultural, education and leisure destination, it is wine that has made - and continues to make - Stellenbosch famous.

A variety of soils and locations ideally suited to flourishing of a wide variety of grape cultivars, has seen Stellenbosch continue to dominate the South African wine scene in terms of quality. With the growing acceptance of South African wines globally, Stellenbosch remains at the forefront of growth in the wine industry.

The region's potential for producing quality of the wines and as a tourism hub has seen investors from as far a field as France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and America staking their claim in the Stellenbosch winelands.

In 1971 Stellenbosch became the first wine region in South Africa to establish a wine route as an organised network of wineries at which the tourist could experience the product of the vine and tune into the soul of the region's winelands. The Stellenbosch Wine Routes currently provide a co-ordinated network of more than 150 wineries, each offering a unique cellar-door experience for the wine-lover and tourist. The Stellenbosch Wine Routes include 5 sub-routes which each have their own characteristics in terms of prominent wine styles, climates and geographical location.



As part of the Cape Winelands, the Stellenbosch Wine Routes are part of the six most popular tourist attractions in South Africa and are also connected to the global Great Wine Capitals Network.