

A culinary adventure guide for your best foodie festive season

Whether you're a local or a tourist soaking up all that SA has to offer (including some of the world's best food) this culinary guide will help you have an excellent foodie festive season.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Dineplan has compiled a list of under-the-radar neighbourhood gems with five-star reviews, where the tables are usually filled with locals. Regardless of whether you're after the finer side of dining or a pocket-friendly meal, eating in South Africa has never been more exciting!

Johannesburg

Joburg locals are movers and shakers with a discerning taste for the finer things in life. It's therefore no surprise that the bustling City of Gold offers a vast and varied culinary scene. So, if you're 'in the know' about where to go, you'll never have a bad meal.



Tashas Café opens in Lynnwood, Pretoria

9 Dec 2022



Using iconic landmarks as your guide, head straight from Lanseria airport and pay a visit to the Cradle of Humankind and the Nirox Sculpture Park. Once you've had your fill of human history and artistic installations, stop in at the Park's on-site restaurant, And Then There Was Fire. There are few things South Africans love as much as a braai, and this spot celebrates that spirit.

Next, take a tour of South Africa's largest township, Soweto, and its renowned Vilakazi Street. In between the Mandela House Museum and Archbishop Desmond Tutu's former home, you'll find Sakhumzi, which is famous for serving up a truly authentic, local culinary experience.

You can also drive across town to Houghton and dine at Insights at Sanctuary Mandela. Set in the late president's primary place of residence, this fine dining restaurant pays tribute to Madiba's favourite dishes, based on recipes prepared by his long-time personal chef, Xoliswa Ndoyiya.



Image supplied: And Then There Was Fire in Johannesburg

From there, you're spoiled for choice. How about a sophisticated Afternoon Tea at the Saxon Hotel, one of Johannesburg's most iconic locations? You could also find your way to the discreetly hidden Marabi Club which, named after the urban culture born in the 1920s and '30s, pays respect to a bygone era with its punchy, locally-inspired menu and lively jazz nights.

Durban

It's a different way of life in KwaZulu-Natal. While it may be a little more laid back, the culinary experiences are no less impressive. From the golden beaches of Ballito and Umhlanga, to the buzz of the inner city and the rolling Midlands – and beyond – these are the must-try restaurants that the locals love in Durban.

If your trek through the province starts with a road trip through the Midlands, Skyfall Casual and Fine Dining restaurants should be on your list. There's no shortage of things to do while doing the Midlands Meander, but for all foodies, both of Skyfall's restaurants are not to be missed.



Image supplied: The Chef's Table in Durban

Once you're in Durban central, near the harbour is one of the city's most-loved restaurants – 9th Avenue Waterside, and it's easy to see why. Aside from the glorious setting overlooking the yachts, 9th Avenue is known for its interesting menu, featuring classics and reimagined bistro dishes.

Further up the coast are a number of spots to choose from. The Ocean Terrace at The Oyster Box Hotel needs no introduction and should be on every foodie's hit list. Enjoy a meal sitting out on the candy-striped terrace, with views of the Indian Ocean and the iconic Umhlanga Lighthouse.

If you're looking for a sophisticated fine dining experience, The Chefs' Table is a no-brainer. The hundreds of five-star reviews they receive don't lie – the ever-changing menu showcases the best that local produce has to offer, while the open kitchen lets diners watch the chefs at work.

For something a little more lowkey, Sunsets and Mermaids is a new beach bar making waves in Umhlanga and, with an impressive cocktail list, it is the ultimate location for a summery sundowner.

Cape Town

Known for its world-class food scene, just as much as it is for the beautiful beaches and incredible mountains, the Mother City and its surrounding areas are home to some of the country's top-rated restaurants and dining experiences. But it's not all fine dining, all the time. There are some low-key spots, packed with locals, that give the fancy tasting menus a run for their money.

Kick things off in the centre of Cape Town at Clarke's. Possibly the worst-kept insider secret, Clarke's is the very definition of a true Cape Town spot. Their diner-style set-up makes it the ideal hangout any time of the day or night and word on the street is that they make the best burger in town.



Seafood restaurant Urchin opens in Cape Town

8 Dec 2022



If you find yourself near the V&A Waterfront during the day, be sure to stop in at Emazulwini Restaurant. When looking for

a memorable, modern South African dining experience, few are doing it like chef and owner Mmabatho Molefe. Her reimagination of Zulu heritage cooking is in a league of its own.

As the sun starts to set, head to Gigi's rooftop bar. Above the aptly named Gorgeous George Hotel, Gigi's bar boasts a cocktail list as long as its food menu. Be sure to book, though, as everyone in Cape Town has the same idea.

Around the corner is Tjing Tjing House, a three-storey, one-stop shop for inner-city wining and dining. Known for its modern, Japanese-inspired experience, Tjing Tjing Momiji offers a considered set menu in a tranquil dining room. Head upstairs to the rooftop bar for world-class cocktails and snacks if you want something a little more raucous.



Image supplied: Clarke's in Cape Town

If you're taking a drive out of the city – and aren't going quite as far as the Winelands just yet – Melkbos Kitchen is undeniably one of the Western Cape's most-loved neighbourhood gems. Get the best view of the sun setting over Cape Town while enjoying a sharing platter or deliciously fresh sushi.

On the opposite side of the peninsula, you'll find Aegir Project Brewery producing its own incredible craft beers and serving some of the best burgers and pizzas you can find. This crowd-pleaser is the best pitstop after a leisurely drive around Chapman's Peak.

Winelands

Want to get out of Cape Town? A day spent exploring one of the Cape's many wine routes is always a good idea. And there's certainly no shortage of incredible restaurants to choose from, starting right in the centre of Stellenbosch at Eike. Bertus Basson is a stalwart of South African heritage cooking, which he showcases beautifully here. Housed in a historic building on the famous Dorp Street, Eike's locally inspired menu is a treat for tourists and locals alike.

If you find yourself in Franschhoek, Arkeste is a must for all food lovers. Richard Carstens is one of the forefathers of fine dining in South Africa and while his latest venture, Arkeste, on the Chamonix estate changes gear from his previous restaurants, it's a guaranteed culinary treat. If you're out for wine tasting, Chardonnay fans will love Glenwood Vineyards. Considering the outstanding sushi paired with their wines, this scenic spot is highly recommended by locals.



Image supplied: Mila at Doolhof in the Winelands

There are more than enough reasons to visit Tulbagh, but the 300-year-old Twee Jonge Gezellen Tasting Room at Krone should be at the top of the list. The estate produces a selection of fine, vintage Cap Classiques, and what better way to experience them than in the design-forward tasting room? On the way there or back, stop in at Mila at Doolhof on Bain's Kloof Pass. A recent addition to the Wellington scene, Mila at Doolhof serves a simple menu of seasonal ingredients. A bonus for those with children, the beautiful setting has lots of space for kids to play.

West Coast and Garden Route

Seasoned road trippers know that both the West Coast and Garden Route are worth the drive just for the scenic views alone, but that doesn't mean you have to sacrifice on food. Some of the country's best cooking is happening in these unexpected destinations.

Start from the West Coast, at The Jetty Restaurant at Fryer's Cove in Doringbaai. A joint project with the local community, The Jetty Restaurant is a celebration of Weskus fare. Pair a cold glass of the crisp Fryer's Cove Sauvignon Blanc with their famous fish and chips and your lunch will be the catch of the day. In nearby Paternoster, Oep ve Koep Bistro is the lowkey sister restaurant to award-winning Wolfgat and showcases the best of Strandveld cooking with a small set menu. The bakery here is also worth a detour.



Image supplied: Serendipity

Cruising over to the Garden Route, you'll find The Fat Fish in George and Plettenberg Bay. Head here for impeccably fresh seafood and sushi. The Plett location has a prime view of Beacon Isle, while the George spot is nestled amongst a leafy garden. If you're stopping over in Wilderness, be sure to book a spot at the Serendipity guesthouse's restaurant. In addition to its serene surroundings, the restaurant is cooking up some incredible, refined fare.

For the full list of eateries to try these holidays, go [here](#).

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