



SECRET CITY

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE
TO THE WORLD'S
COOLEST NEIGHBOURHOODS

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION	4	Dubai	24	Hong Kong	58	Edinburgh	88	Berlin	134	NORTH AMERICA	172	Austin	216	New York City	260	Wellington	302	Buenos Aires	322
				Seoul	64	London	92	Prague	144	San Francisco	174	New Orleans	224	Boston	270	Auckland	306	Rio de Janeiro	328
AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST	6	ASIA	30	Tokyo	68	Barcelona	100	Stockholm	150	Portland	182	Chicago	232						
Marrakesh	8	Mumbai	32			Paris	110	Budapest	154	Vancouver	188	Atlanta	240	OCEANIA	276	SOUTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN	312		
Cape Town	12	Bangkok	38	EUROPE	78	Amsterdam	118	Istanbul	160	Seattle	196	Toronto	244	Perth	278	Lima	314		
Tel Aviv	18	Singapore	46	Lisbon	80	Rome	122	Moscow	166	Los Angeles	202	Washington, DC	248	Melbourne	284	Havana	318		
		Beijing	52	Dublin	84	Copenhagen	130			Mexico City	210	Philadelphia	254	Sydney	292			ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	336

INTRODUCTION

It's easy to fall in love with San Francisco. But to understand what makes the city tick, I needed to do a little sleuthing.

The first time I explored this preening peacock of a city, I dutifully toured its signature attractions. I weaved through crowds on the Golden Gate Bridge, I boarded the ferry to Alcatraz, I queued for big-ticket galleries... but something was missing. My feet were tired, my wallet was emptying fast, yet I was learning little about why locals love the city by the bay.

Following the advice of San Franciscans, I turned my attention to the city's outlying neighbourhoods. And that's when San Francisco truly revealed its gritty, glittering self. Looking down from Potrero Hill as the late-afternoon sunshine painted the skyline gold, the city started to work its magic. Deep in a bar in industrial neighbourhood Dogpatch, to the maracas sound of cocktail shakers, I no longer felt an outsider but like one of the locals.

Seeking out intriguing neighbourhoods continues to enrich my travels. I fell head over heels with Melbourne (p. 284) by brunching my way through Brunswick and bolting into Windsor's hidden bars. Basing myself in Sukhumvit allowed me to dive head-first into the giddy nightlife of Bangkok (p. 38).

It's the joy of exploring neighbourhoods that inspired us to create *Secret City*, a curious traveller's guide to 50 cities around the world. Some are classic destinations like Paris (p. 110), Rome (p. 122) and Istanbul (p. 160), which have long lured travellers to their timeless attractions. Other cities have undergone dramatic changes over recent years, so much so that an insider's recommendations can completely transform a traveller's experience: cities like Havana

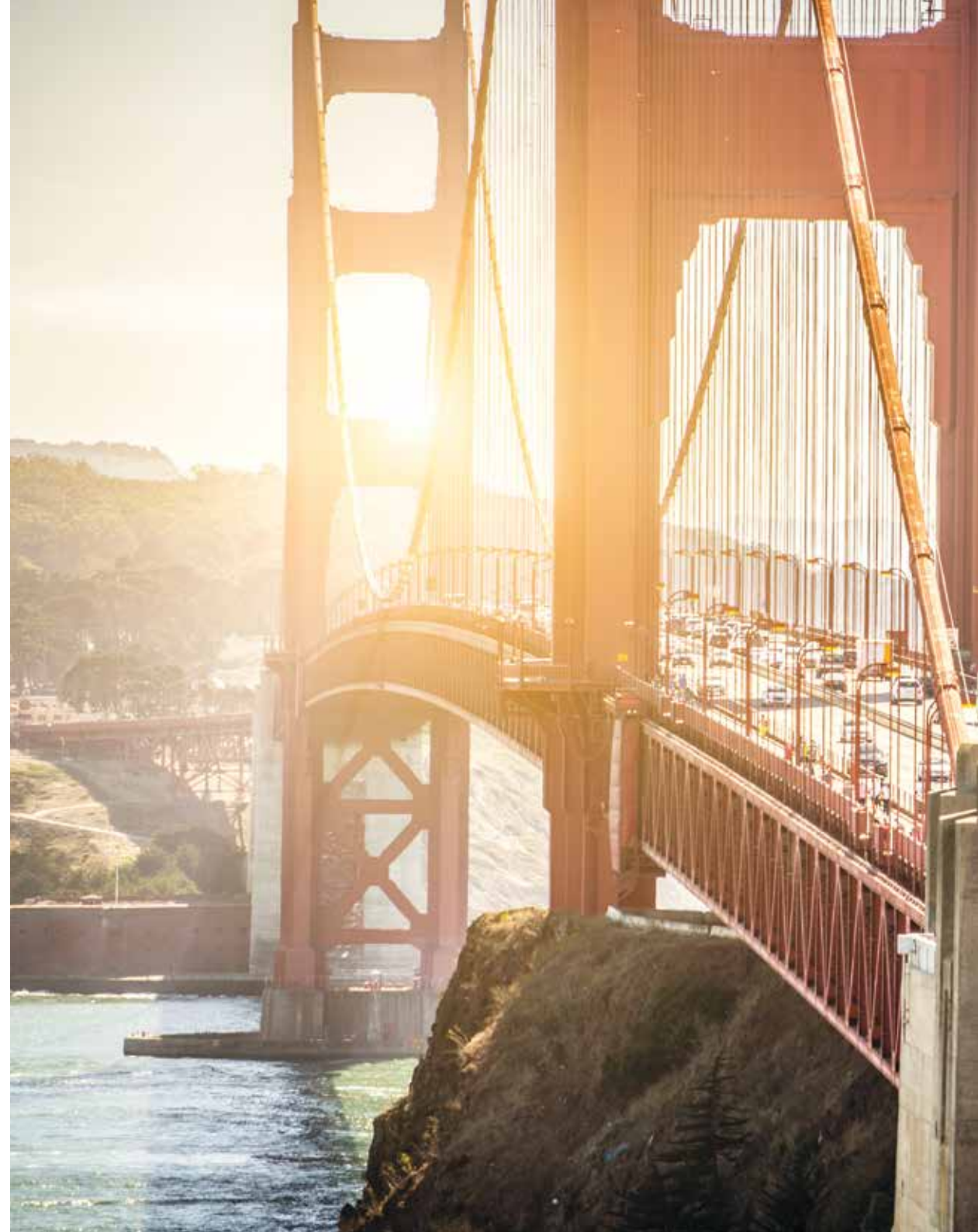
(p. 318), Austin (p. 216), Lima (p. 314) and Moscow (p. 166). We also included popular cities that travellers think they know well – blonde, beachy Sydney (p. 292); desert-backed glamourpuss Dubai (p. 24); haven of the cashed-up, beautiful Los Angeles (p. 202) – and asked our in-the-know writers to reveal the hidden scoop.

For each of the 50 cities profiled in the book, we've swung the spotlight onto neighbourhoods where you can feel the rhythms of local life. Sometimes the city's most well-trampled streets are only a short distance away but there's a well-concealed treasure: perhaps a blink-and-you'll-miss-it cafe in Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana (p. 329) or a historic jazz bar in Stockholm's Gamla Stan (p. 151). Elsewhere we profile neighbourhoods you might not know much about but should really consider staying in: Tokyo's grungy Kōenji (p. 76), barnacle-clung Wapping and Rotherhithe in London (p. 98), and Staten Island's North Shore in New York City (p. 266).

Each neighbourhood profile has out-of-the-ordinary recommendations for eating, drinking, partying and delving into local culture. All of them are hand-picked by experts who know these cities inside out, and they're accompanied by maps to orient you in these exciting districts.

Locals might groan that we've divulged some of their best neighbourhood secrets, but we think you'll love our toolkit for travelling deeply.

Happy exploring,
Anita Isalska, Editor



AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST





ARTS & CULTURE



MUSIC & FILM



SPORTS & LEISURE



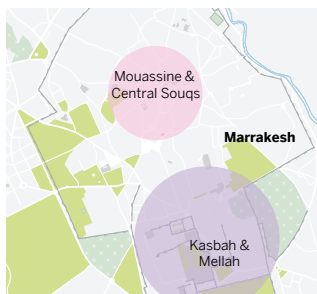
EATING



DRINKING



SHOPPING



MARRAKESH

Bold and at times abrasive, Marrakesh is a many-faced metropolis where modern Africa dances with historic monuments, ancient crafts and caravanserai traditions.

The heart and soul of Marrakesh lie in the tangled guts of its medina, an ancient deep-veined city that started life under the Berber Almoravids in 1070. For centuries it prospered as the epicentre of the western Islamic world, plundered and glorified in turn by successive sultans, and later ruled as a French protectorate. Between 2018 and 2019 the souqs, *funduqs* (ancient inns) and shrines of the medina were scrubbed and restored, making it prettier (and more sanitised) than ever.

The central neighbourhood of Mouassine is riding the winds of change with rooftop cafes and achingly hip boutiques that have one eye on Europe and the other on Africa, all wedged between gritty, working souqs. Travellers seeking a pinch more tranquillity should head south to the Kasbah and Mellah, where Marrakesh's first fortresses were erected and the Saadian Sultan Ahmed al-Mansour entombed his dynasty. Wander on foot to feel the city's full sensory slap.



KASBAH & MELLAH

Approaching the medina's southerly Kasbah and Mellah, the streets widen and storks strut on blushing fortified walls. The Kasbah is Marrakesh's oldest quarter and its cluster of ancient sights – the Badi Palace, Bahia Palace and Saadian Tombs – bring floods of visitors. Tour groups rarely linger and it remains a mellow neighbourhood, especially when combined with Marrakesh's old Jewish quarter.

Les Jardins de la Medina

One of the medina's largest palm-fringed pools lies behind the deceptively blank facade of Les Jardins de la Medina riad. When the mercury spikes, there's no better place for a swim. Day access packages (Dh400 to Dh650) include lunch by the pool and graceful colonial bar

(and yes, it does serve alcohol).

21 Derb Chtouka, Kasbah; www.lesjardinsdelamedina.com.

Café Clock

This import from Fez is far more than a cafe famed for its camel burgers. Come for its cultural roster supporting local talents: there are jam sessions, tribal beat

music from Gnaoua performers, calligraphy classes, cooking workshops and cinema nights. Moroccan storytelling evenings are particularly poignant, striving to record a fading oral history. **224 Derb Chtouka, Kasbah; www.cafeclock.com; 9am-11pm.**

Lazama Synagogue

Established in 1492 by Jews expelled from Spain, the Lazama Synagogue is an active place of worship and a museum exploring 2000 years of Jewish heritage in Morocco. It offers a window into the history of Marrakesh's Jewish diaspora (there are only 150 left). **Derb Talmud Tora, Mellah; 9am-7pm Sun-Thu, to 6pm Fri; Dh10.**

Kaftan Queen

Good-quality, contemporary kaftans are the lifeblood of this hidden, first-floor fashion boutique. Maxi, bejewelled, patterned or plain – shoppers can take their time trying them on in sumptuous fitting rooms, paired with pastel *babouches* (slippers). **1st fl, 186 Al Fatouki (enter from Rue Riad Zitoun el-Kedim); www.facebook.com/Kaftanqueen; 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat.**

Place des Ferblantiers

Once a hive of metalworkers, this industrious square is gateway to the Mellah. Guarding its perimeter are the Mellah Market, where butchers routinely behead chickens amid the perfume of florists, the Grand Bijouterie jewellers' souq, and an approachable covered spice souq.



© Pavlha / Getty Images

MOUASSINE & CENTRAL SOUQS

Walk due north from the Djemaa el Fna's din of drums and you'll eventually emerge in a clash of inventive boutiques and ancient architecture. This is where many treasures are made and popular museums reside, but it's also the area modernising fastest.

Al Nour

Hand-stitched cotton kaftans, kids' smocks and elegant scarves are all imagined in uncharacteristically nude and earthy tones at this top-quality textile store run by a cooperative for disabled women. **19 Derb Moulay El Ghali; www.alnour-textiles.com; 9.30am-2pm & 3-7.30pm.**

Ben Youssef Food Stalls

If you can't face the scrum of eating in the Djemaa el Fna, this backstreet maze of charcoal-fired grill stands offers the same local theatre minus much of the hassle. To find them, follow the plumes of smoke that lace the streets just south of the Ben Youssef Mosque around lunchtime. **11am-3pm.**

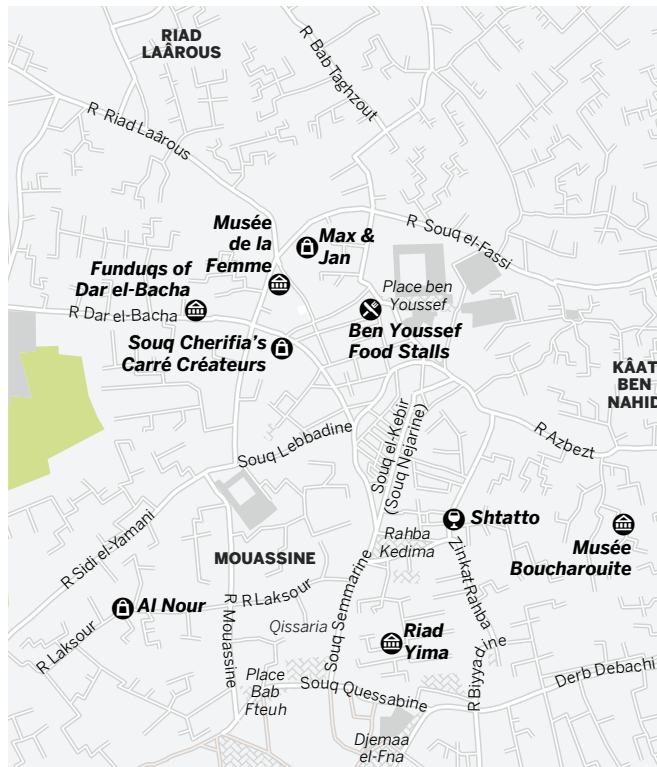
Musée Boucharouite

Boucharouites are Morocco's raggedy carpets of the poor, made with strips of discarded clothing, and this private museum in an 18th-century riad is an eloquent celebration of their charms. One of its secret pleasures is the quiet rooftop cafe.

Riad Yima

While the ambience is one of calm, the rooms of this riad gallery and teahouse are a riot of in-your-face pop art and homewares inspired by North African life. Riad Yima is the medina hideaway of acclaimed Moroccan artist and photographer Hassan Hajjaj, chock-a-block with kitsch *babouches* and contemporary photography featuring hijab-cloaked African women. **52 Derb Aajane, Rahba Lakdima; www.riadyima.com; 10am-7pm Sat-Thu, 10am-1.30pm & 2.30pm-7pm Fri.**

Derb el Cadi; www.facebook.com/musee.boucharouite; 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, closed Aug; Dh40.



Shtatto

Naked bulbs are strung across the whitewashed rooftop, the gravel tone of grinding coffee floats on the breeze, and straw-hatted fashionistas scan the 'gram under palms. Below there's three floors of *très chic* shops, including Amine Bendriouich couture. **81 Derb Nkal, Rahba Lakdima; www.shtattomarrakech.com; 9am-10pm.**

© 2019, Riad Yima



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Souq Cherifia's Carré Créateurs

The first floor of this makeshift souq is known as the 'artisan square', an exciting collection of independent (mostly female) Moroccan designers. Highlights include Tilila, with its Berber-bling *babouches*, Sisi Morocco's one-off, lino-printed cushions, and hand-embroidered hessian shoes and bags from Khmissa. **Off R Mouassine; 10am-7pm.**

Funduqs of Dar el-Bacha

Marrakesh's ancient network of caravanserai inns still exist, many of them now converted into rustic artisan workshops, and Dar el-Bacha is a thoroughfare with

SPIRITUAL SCRUB

If you want to see behind the veil of Marrakshi life you need to visit the local hammam. Every neighbourhood has one, with different hours or entrances for men and women. They are always single-sex because everybody inside is completely naked. The one in Mouassine is tourist-friendly. Go armed like the locals – with black olive soap to wash and a mitt to scrub away the dead skin (both of these can be bought in the souqs).

a large cluster of them. Funduq el Mizane was once used for weighing goods, and a giant pair of scales still stands inside. Funduq El Amir is worth a look for its red ochre, geometric decor.

Max & Jan

The horseshoe entryway to this concept store is like a Narnia door to contemporary African fashion, super-cool homewares and a rooftop restaurant. One half of the Belgian/Swiss design duo behind the store, Maximilian Scharl, was born in Casablanca. Collections are designed and produced in Morocco. **16 R Amsefah; www.maxandjan.com; 10am-7pm.**

Musée de la Femme

The little-visited Women's Museum is the first initiative of its kind in North Africa, launched by a group of local men to preserve women's culture. **40 R Sidi Abdelaziz; www.museedelafemme.ma; 9.30am-6.30pm.**

Clockwise from top left: colourful Riad Yima; brimming sacks in Ben Youssef Sq; Max & Jan's chic designs

© Marc Van Vaek / 2019, Max & Jan





ARTS & CULTURE



MUSIC & FILM



SPORTS & LEISURE



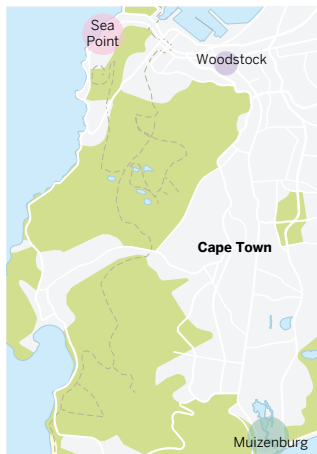
EATING



DRINKING



SHOPPING



CAPE TOWN

Cape Town is like that kid in school who had it all: fun, popular, a little bit quirky and undeniably, indescribably beautiful.

It doesn't matter where you are in Cape Town, Table Mountain provides an endlessly impressive backdrop. For many, Sea Point is the perfect neighbourhood: it has all the energy of the inner city but with the calming addition of the Atlantic Ocean crashing alongside the promenade. You can jump on a bus from here and head east to Woodstock, an industrial suburb that's more gritty than pretty – though it does have a perfect view of Devil's Peak. The neighbourhood is undergoing gradual gentrification, with art galleries and gin distilleries sharing the streets with factories and busy workshops. Board a train to get to Muizenberg, a seaside suburb some 20km south. Here, regeneration has also played a role, with arty stores and cool bars providing a reason to visit beyond the excellent surf and coastal walking path.



SEA POINT

Long and skinny, wedged between ocean and mountain, Sea Point's action is largely found on two very busy strips. So busy, in fact, that you can find local haunts and near-secret spots hiding between more frequented restaurants and bars on Regent Road and Main Road. Sea Point is primarily known for its eating opportunities, with cuisine from every continent bar Antarctica represented.

Sea Point Contact

Charles Darwin spent 18 days in Cape Town on his homeward-bound journey in 1836. His main interest wasn't animals but rocks, specifically at a point where hot magma had baked onto the sedimentary rock and cooled to form granite. Also known as Charles Darwin's Rocks, a plaque

marks the spot, which is a great place to watch the sunset. *Queen's Beach.*

Hesheng

You might well get a lesson in what constitutes 'real' Chinese food when you sit down, but it's worth it for the authentic feast that ends up arriving at your table.

It's an unassuming and utterly unfussy place that's rightfully popular with Cape Town's Chinese community. 269 Main Rd; <http://hesheng.co.za>; 11am-3pm & 5-9pm Wed-Mon.

Total Garage

In a neighbourhood known for its dining scene, it seems odd to head to a gas station for breakfast, but Sea Point locals swear by the baked goods here. Pick up some fresh bagels, carrot cake or their legendary cheesecake. The coffee is also excellent. 345 Main Rd; 021 439 4034; 24hr.

@Seoul

Cape Town's Korean cuisine offering is limited, but this little place would fit right in on a Gangnam side street. All the classics are here: *deok boki* (rice cakes in a spicy sauce), *bibimbap* and excellent soups including *doenjang jjigae* and hearty *samgyetang*. There are only a few tables so book ahead. 72 Regent Rd; 021 439 3373; noon-2pm & 6-10.30pm Mon-Sat.

Lion's Head

Hiking up Lion's Head is hardly a secret but few people start their hike from the Sea Point side of the mountain – so for the first section at least, you'll likely have the path to yourself. Look out for the Kramat of Shaykh Mohamed Hassen Ghaibie along the way – this shrine was left remarkably unscathed after a massive wildfire in early 2019. The hike starts at the top of Rhine Road.



© Gary Latham / Lonely Planet

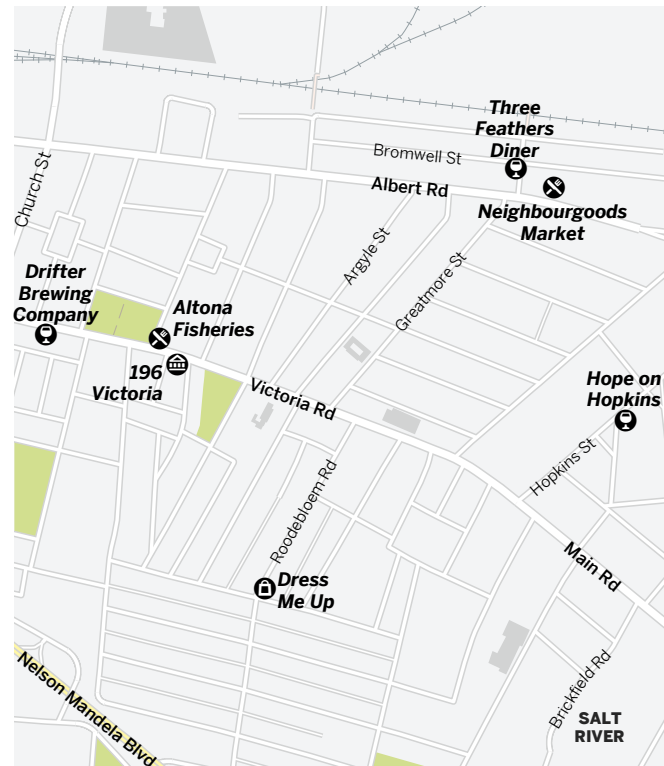
WOODSTOCK

One of the hippest neighbourhoods in the city, Woodstock is home to microbreweries, craft distilleries, coffee roasteries and art studios. At heart, it's still an industrial district – after dark you'd be wise to summon a ride-share service to get from A to B. Thanks to its slow gentrification, there are plenty of newly opened attractions and hidden sights to seek out, some even sitting on the main roads.

Altona Fisheries

Clear your dining schedule for the rest of the day. As well as fish and chips, Altona serves Cape Town's home-grown mega-sandwich, the Gatsby. The

foot-long rolls are stuffed with chips, salad and a choice of fish, masala steak or Vienna sausages. A magnificent hangover cure. 127 Victoria Rd; 021 447 0735; 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat.



Dress Me Up

Woodstock is awash with galleries and funky little stores. This friendly place specialises in retro and vintage clothes and is a favourite for revellers heading out to the annual AfrikaBurn, South Africa's answer to Burning Man. As well as fabulous dresses and some wonderfully weird headgear, you'll find retro *objets d'art* and a few vinyl records. 77 Rodebloem Rd; 072 713 8907; 11am-6pm Tue-Sat.

Drifter Brewing Company

Drifter embodies the ethos of the global craft beer scene: a bunch of creatives having a mighty good time and producing great beer while they're at it. Seasonal brews are served alongside the core range (ask for a blend of their coconut ale and smoked porter) in the nautically themed taproom. If you're feeling flush, grab a bottle of the ocean-aged tripel to sip with friends on the balcony, which has a great view of Devil's Peak. 156 Victoria Rd; www.drifterbrewing.co.za; 3-10pm Fri, 11am-3pm Sat.

Hope on Hopkins

Lucy Beard and Leigh Lisk are at the forefront of Cape Town's gin distilling scene. The tasting room overlooks their distillery, but advance booking is recommended – they're only open on Saturday afternoons and it's a popular spot for locals seeking to sip the latest creations. Tastings are refreshingly relaxed: order

a trio of gins and taste at your leisure while lounging on couches. 7 Hopkins St; <https://hopeonhopkins.co.za>; noon-5pm Sat.

196 Victoria

Despite its impressive facade, you could easily pass by the 196 Victoria building without realising you can actually go inside. And you'd probably never guess what you'll find within: a selection of artisans and holistic therapists, a yoga studio and Clay Hands, where ceramicist Natasha Viljoen encourages potters of all ages to play and create. 196 Victoria Rd; www.196victoria.com.

Three Feathers Diner

You can enter this 'man cave' diner through the Woodstock Co-op, a store selling art and fashion from local designers. The change from serene shopping experience to atmospheric



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BEER & GRAFFITI CRAWL

Local resident Hester Bergh (061 533 6622) combines a love of good ale and good art in these half-day tours around her neighbourhood. Woodstock is rich in street art and you'll get the stories behind these inner city murals as you wander, stopping at a couple of microbreweries on the way.

bar with graffiti-adorned walls, pinball machine and pool table, plus a couple of classic American cars, pretty much sums up everything that is awesome about Woodstock. 78 Bromwell St; <https://three-feathers-diner.business.site>; 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat.

Neighbourgoods Market

Perhaps the best time to visit Woodstock is on a Saturday morning when the enduringly popular and ever-busy Neighbourgoods Market takes place at the Old Biscuit Mill. The market, which mostly specialises in foodstuffs, is about as un-secret as it gets, but the crowds it pulls spill out into the surrounding streets and give Woodstock a buzz it tends to lack during the rest of the week. If you're visiting Cape Town, this market shouldn't be missed. 375 Albert Rd; www.neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za; 9am-3pm Sat.

Top: food stalls galore at Neighbourgoods Market
Left: Hope on Hopkins



© Michelle Parkin Photography / 2019, Hope on Hopkins

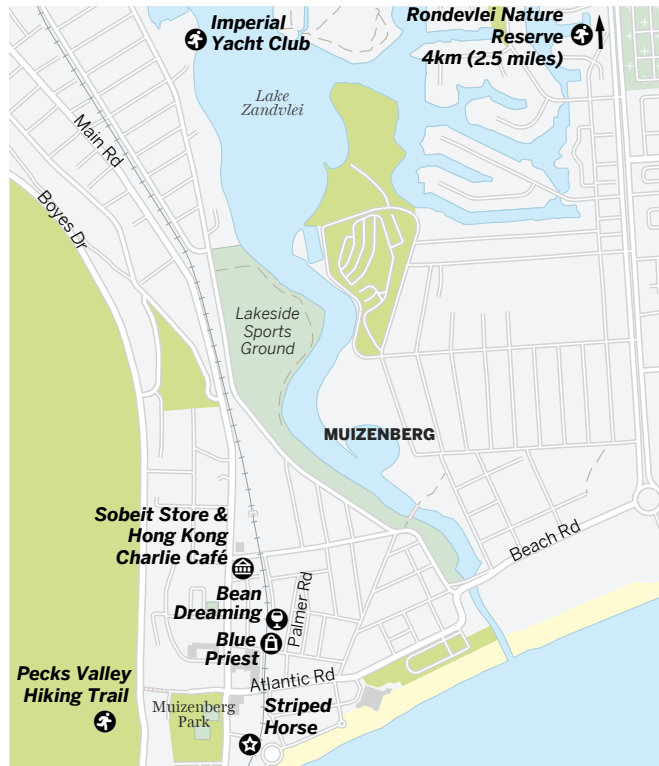
MUIZENBERG

Once a run-down row of boarded-up buildings, Muizenberg's seafront has happily received a massive facelift and now houses some great bars and restaurants. Of course, the main strip is known by all and you'll need to wander the narrow side streets to see the cafes and one-off boutiques the 'Berg's Bohemian residents love so dearly.

Sobeit Store & Hong Kong Charlie Café

Hidden in plain sight on the main road from Tokai, Sobeit is a self-described 'mayhem space'. Upstairs, artists work on paintings, sculpture and unique pieces

of art. Downstairs, the studio's work is sold alongside antiques, locally made jewellery, utterly unique furniture and to quote the studio's literature, 'other cool shit'. It's a marvellous place to browse while waiting for your



sushi platter at the in-store cafe. 51 Main Rd; www.facebook.com/SobeitStudioCapeTown; 8am-9pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun.

Striped Horse

Although this beachfront bar alongside the train tracks is hardly hidden, most know it as a place for light lunch and a pint of craft beer. But on weekend evenings, the normally chilled pub bursts at the seams with Capetonians coming to watch live local bands. 12-14 York Rd; <http://stripedhorsebar.com>; 9am-1am Mon, noon-1am Tue-Sat, 11am-9pm Sun.

Pecks Valley Hiking Trail

It's a steep hike up Pecks Valley to Muizenberg Peak, from where you get great views of the beach and on clear days, right across False Bay. The hike starts from Boyes Dr and can continue all the way to Silvermine, but this is a secluded section of the mountains, so be sure to walk in a group. Boyes Dr.

Blue Priest

It's not far from the beach, but many visitors to the 'Berg never wander into what locals call 'The Village'. The narrow streets here are mostly residential, but Palmer Rd is dotted with cool shops and places to eat. Blue Priest sells one-off streetwear rich in African prints – grab a custom cap or a unique pair of boardies to wear to the beach. 42 Palmer Rd; www.facebook.com/BLEUPRIEST.CO.ZA; 10am-6pm Tue-Thu, to 8pm Fri & Sat, to 2pm Sun.

MADE IN MUIZENBERG

Although their flagship shop has closed, Made in Muizenberg is still striving to celebrate local entrepreneurs, performers and artisans. They organise occasional markets, festivals, classes and workshops all designed to showcase the craftwork and general creativity of the 'Berg's residents. Keep an eye on what they're planning next: www.facebook.com/madeinmuizenberg.

Imperial Yacht Club

Everyone knows you can surf, stand-up paddleboard and kitesurf in Muizenberg, but only a short distance inland you can also learn to sail on Zandvlei, a lake that's enormously popular

with picnicking Capetonians but somehow remains almost undiscovered by visitors. 1 Promenade Ave; <http://imperialyachtclub.co.za>.

Bean Dreaming

Husband-and-wife team Kiam and Stef share this space to each follow their own personal dream. Stef is out front serving great coffee and some seriously decadent pancakes in the cafe, while Kiam works as a tattoo artist in the studio behind. 34 Palmer Rd; www.facebook.com/beandreamingcoffee; 084 232 0537; 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun.

Rondevlei Nature Reserve

Sightings are near-mythical, but there are hippos in the water at Rondevlei, a 10-minute drive from the beach. More often sighted are some of the 200-odd bird species that call the lake home. Fishermans Walk, Zeekovlei; 7.30am-5pm.

Top: a row of rainbow-coloured beach huts in seafront Muizenberg
Left: Striped Horse bar



© St-Photography / Shutterstock



© Hein van Tonder / 2019, Striped Horse Bar



ARTS & CULTURE



MUSIC & FILM



SPORTS & LEISURE



EATING



DRINKING



SHOPPING



TEL AVIV

Cosmopolitan, vibrant and ever-changing, Tel Aviv is a heady collision of high tech, glitzy nightlife, Bauhaus architecture and pungent markets.

Tel Aviv is a bit of an urban sprawl, albeit one punctuated by peaceful green spaces and fringed by a strip of fine beaches. While attractions are spread out all over Tel Aviv, many sights worth your time are concentrated in the historic neighbourhoods in the south of the city, squeezed between the ancient port city of Jaffa to the south and the Old North beyond Arlozorov St.

Neve Tzedek is a top choice for travellers who enjoy exploring narrow cobbled lanes and making chance discoveries of characterful cafes and independent boutiques. A short walk south, Florentin is the rough-around-the-edges home of young, on-trend types. It's rich in street art, art studios, fusion restaurants and bars, with the hubbub of Levinsky Market just steps away.

The city centre is easily walkable. If you want to get the most out of Tel Aviv, it's worth renting a bicycle and taking to its many cycle lanes.



NEVE TZEDEK

North of Jaffa is Tel Aviv's oldest neighbourhood. It's hemmed by trendy Florentin to the east and borders the historic Yemeni neighbourhood of Karem HaTeimanim and Lev Ha'ir (Tel Aviv's city centre) to the north. Its quiet tangle of narrow streets, lined with pastel-coloured houses, is easily navigated on foot. Its main street, Shabazi St, runs gently downhill to the Tel Aviv Promenade.

Rokach House-Museum

The full-figured, naked ceramic ladies that greet visitors here are the works of Lea Majaro-Mintz, the great-granddaughter of one of Tel Aviv's pioneers. In 1887, Shimon Rokach and his family were one of 10 families chosen to settle the Neve Tzedek district. Besides an exhibition on early Tel Aviv life,

Rokach House doubles as an art gallery. **Shimon Rokach St 36; www.rokach-house.co.il; 10am & 2pm Thu & Sat.**

Alma Café

This cafe has earned itself a loyal local following with its vegetarian and vegan recipes – from hummus omelettes and vegetable

shawarma to moreish *shakshuka* (eggs poached in a spiced tomato sauce), imaginative salads and French toast. Popular for brunch. **Shabazi St 55; 03-516-8793; 8.30am-11pm.**

Hummus HaCarmel

A five-minute walk north from Neve Tzedek, this hole-in-the-wall in the middle of bustling Carmel Market is locally renowned for its superlative hummus. The stained-glass entrance and scrolls on the wall remind you that you're dining in a repurposed synagogue. Try the original or the *masabacha*, both served with homemade pickles. **HaCarmel St 11; 7.30am-4.30pm Sun-Fri.**

Suzanne Dellal Centre

In 1989, an 1890s school was turned into this locally beloved centre for modern dance and drama, breathing new life into the neighbourhood, which was in decline at the time. Catch a performance by the Batsheva or the Inbal Dance Company, or enjoy the tranquillity of the beautifully landscaped courtyards. **Yehieli St 5; www.suzannedellal.org.il; box office 9am-9pm Sun-Thu, to 1pm Fri.**

Eden Cinema

This handsome art deco building once housed Tel Aviv's first cinema, founded in 1913 and in business until 1975. It originally screened silent movies accompanied by orchestra music. These days it's a beloved cultural landmark. **Lillienblum St 2.**



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