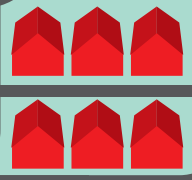
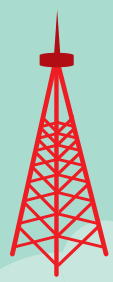
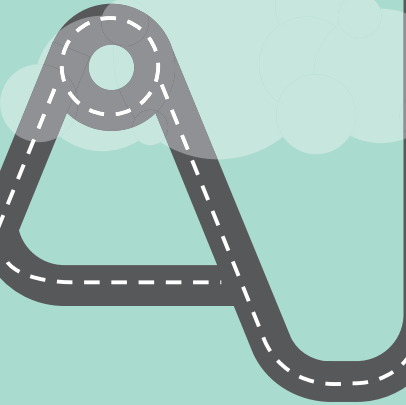
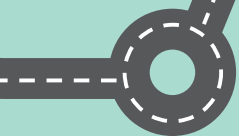
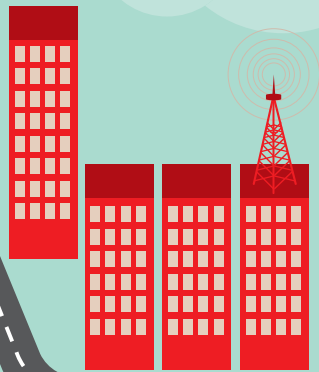


The Concierge
OUTDOOR CONSULTANTS



YOUR DURBAN CITY GUIDE



SO YOU'RE ABOUT TO INVADE DURBAN

You've packed your sun block and borrowed a Hawaiian shirt — but most importantly you've got this guide in your hand. That means you're going to get more out of surf city, day or night. We're giving you a quirky inside look at the stuff you want to know, like: where's the good chow — really? Where can I sleep happy? Where can I drink too much and which way to the beach to see the sunrise? Show me the places that are dodgy — but unmissable. Read through this carefully assembled guide and get the lowdown, without wasting your time on dead ends and letdowns. We've condensed invaluable local knowledge, so you can experience the city without getting caught up in the lame tourist traps. So, off you go then. Go on!

PHOTO OPS

Going on holiday is all about bringing back snaps your friends can be jealous of. Here's the pick of the best vantage points in and around Banana City for amateur lens-persons.

Battery Beach For uninterrupted beach sand that stretches for miles either way.

Durban Botanical Gardens on the lush Berea. For those sweet family pics to send to Aunt Gwyneth in Brisbane.

Roma Revolving Restaurant Find it on the 32nd floor of John Ross House on the Esplanade (it's right at the very top). On a good day, you can climb up to the roof for 360-degree views of Durban.

Tala Game Reserve Just 40 minutes away on the N3, this compact, game-rich reserve is great for both overnight and day trips. It provides ample opportunities to photograph game and pretend you are actually in the Kruger National Park.

Umhlanga Ridge In the evening, you get a great view of the bay from here, complete with cargo ships waiting to enter the harbour.

Wilson's Wharf at the harbour. From here you can book a cheap cruise out to sea, to look at the city from the dolphins' point of view.

KNOW YOUR PLACE

It's time to orientate yourself in Surf City. Let's say, hypothetically, that you're standing on the beachfront, North Beach, with the sea at your back. OK?

That sea of course is the Indian Ocean. It's full of sharks, jellyfish and strange things that have fallen off ships, and it stretches all the way to Australia, with not much in between. Looking straight ahead, you can see a huge clump of hotels, office blocks and residences mostly designed, unfortunately, in the style of the 1970s — blocky! Anyway this is the city centre, which is laid out in an easy-to-navigate grid pattern — just look out for the one-way roads. The city centre is full of interesting alleyways and shops and seethes with a varied mix of people. You'd do well to make your way to the middle of it, to check out the City Hall, Durban Art Gallery and the Playhouse. Warwick Junction, with its swarm of stalls and multi traders, will be just to your right shoulder and about 3km's into the city.

Gaze along the beach to your right and you can see the city petering out as your eyes move towards the gently curving North Coast, the so-called Platinum Coast. Moving Northwards, Durban North (Virginia Airport), Umhlanga Rocks (Gateway); beyond that Umdloti, the world-famous Zimbali Coastal Resort, Ballito and lots of greenery all the way to St Lucia and Mozambique. This is the way to head for a beach holiday. Unless, of course, you turn left and are now gazing down the beachfront towards South Beach, Addington Hospital, uShaka Marine World and the sprawling harbour mouth, which opens into the side of the city like a gigantic lagoon.

The harbour is its own country and well worth exploring — start at Wilson's Wharf. Beyond the harbour, you can see the buttress of land called the Bluff, with its eye-catching Millennium Tower. At its foot there used to be a whaling station. Ah, how we don't miss it. Bluff locals love their neighbourhood with the same fervent ardour felt by New York residents for theirs.

Beyond the Bluff, you'd (theoretically) keep following the coastline south to Durban International airport, Amanzimtoti, Scottburgh, Port Shepstone and about three hours away, the old border of the exciting and verdant former Transkei (now part of the Eastern Cape). The South Coast is less fancy than the North, but has a more laid-back, rustic charm of its own. Things move even slower there.

Now, to return to our city-front beach vantage point. Looking straight ahead, beyond the city centre, the land rises gently up towards the leafy Berea, which is prime residential property. Heaving with restaurants, it stretches in a gentle line, just inland of the city centre, from Glenwood/Umbilo to your left, across the N3 freeway, which bisects the Berea to Musgrave and Morningside up to the right. If you were to follow the N3 directly out of Durban, you'd head inland straight ahead towards Westville, Pinetown, Kloof, Hillcrest and the Valley of 1000 Hills. This is country living within 20 minutes of the city! You can follow the M13 off the N3 and take it up into this hinterland of rural charm. Great day trips — all within eyeshot of the city. If instead, you stayed on the N3, you'd wind up in Pietermaritzburg (45 minutes) or Johannesburg (5 hours).

NEED TO KNOWS

The stuff your travel agent should have told you.

If there are those small blue jellyfish washed up on the beach, stay out of the water — those little guys will leave a mark.

From October to February be prepared to sweat. March? More heat, less rain. April through to September: Clear skies all the way, except for the odd cold front.

Drive on the left hand side of the road. Only!

Don't flash your camera around in front of those less fortunate than you are — they might decide to make it their own.

Everything moves slower in Durban; just breathe deeply and accept it.

There are reportedly one or two large pythons loose on the Berea.

If you're single, dress nice and head for Billy the B.U.M.S.'s in a borrowed Beemer. It might just be your lucky night

Read the Mercury for news and listen to East Coast Radio (95.5fm) for vibes.

OVERHEARD IN DURBAN

This alphabetical lingo section will be seriously helpful in bars, shopping centres, sports stadiums or public spaces and may help you to quickly decipher what the heck the beautiful but strange locals are gabbling on about.

Aah One way A cheerful phrase generally used to acknowledge thanks or appreciation, e.g. when someone passes you a beer.

Battery Beach A central Durban beach, great for couples and families. Locals love it for its laid-back atmosphere.

Cricket Sport of choice, certainly over summer. Check out the live games at the Sahara Stadium, Kingsmead.

Diwali The Hindu Festival of Lights (starts October 21). Notorious for its loud fireworks.

Eish Derived from the Zulu, now used widely used to exclaim over hot weather, bad traffic, good food, stylish clothes – anything, really.

Fast lane The part of the freeway it's best to stay out of if you're not quite sure where you're going.

Gravy train A term used to denote the financial gains reaped by political heavy weights.

Howzit Term of greeting, as in "How is it going with you?"

I.C.C. Durban's International Convention Centre, next to the equally visible Hilton Hotel. Mostly frequented by businesspeople, politicians or visiting stars.

Jol A fun party, be it in a club, a street or at someone's house.

Kwaito Catchy South African-style hip-hop music. Most of the taxi's blare it out at full volume.

Love Life Well-meaning but widely misunderstood HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest rate of HIV infection in the world – behave accordingly

Mynah As in Indian Mynah, the pesky birds with yellow beaks that frequent most of the park areas. Also refers to the yellow buses on which you can get around the city.

N3 Main freeway into or out of Durban, entering the city from the west/inland.

Ou (pronounced 'oh') Slang term used for man/boy, as in "Did you hear what that ou said on the radio?"

Perving Using one's eyes to appreciate the abundant attractive anatomy on display at the beach.

Pull in Invitation to join a jol – as in, "Pull into the jol at my place later."

Queue What you'll stand in at the Department of Home Affairs, should you have to go for visas or similar.

Ridge Road A good road to use when navigating the Berea, as it runs like a spine from the University in the South, all the way to the top of Springfield Road in the North. Turn down into...

Springfield Road You can follow this one all the way down to the beachfront. Keep Ridge Road and Springfield Road in mind and you'll find that getting around central Durban isn't too hard.

Shisa This is the Zulu word for 'hot'.

Taxi Go for the red ones called Zippy – they're the best. Avoid the minibus taxis, unless you feel like taking your life in your hands.

Umhlanga The expensive seaside suburb north of the city. Lots of hotels there, great beaches and just inland you'll find Gateway Theatre of Shopping, Durban's best mall.

Virginia Airport The city's small airport and home of the Virginia Air Show (8–9 July). Boasts a great, inexpensive restaurant and bar called Wings.

Warwick Junction The city's centre for informal trade of all kinds, including muti (traditional medicine) and herbs. Worth exploring in a group, during the day – just keep your valuables out of sight.

Yizo Yizo Popular local TV drama series, set in a township school.

Zero tolerance the traffic authorities' policy on drunk driving!

TAKE THE TOUR

City Ricksha Bus Tours Call Herbie (083 289 0509) to take a tour around the city. Take it all in from the roofless upper deck of a double-decker bus.

Sarie Marais Pleasure Cruises (031 305 4022) For a cruise around the harbour.

Dive Nautique (Umhlanga Surf Lifesaving Club, Umhlanga. 082 553 2834). Diving and dolphin viewing excursions.

STUFF YOURSELF SILLY

Eating. It could save your life. But it's also one of life's biggest pleasures – especially in Durban, which has a huge scattering of restaurants ranging from the luxurious to the lame. Take fork in hand and poke about at the best ones.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

Artscafé at KZNSA

(166 Bulwer Road, Glenwood. 031 201 9969). 8:30am–5pm Tuesday to Sunday. Enjoy café-style breakfasts next to leafy Bulwer Park. The adjacent KZNSA art gallery means there's always something strange to gawk at.

Essenwood Craft Market

(Berea Park, Essenwood Road. 031 202 5632). Saturday mornings only. Get there early for bacon rolls or fresh fruit salad. Outdoor relaxation, from 8am to early afternoon. Meet the locals, pat some dogs, shop for bonsais.

Quarters Brasserie

(101 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 303 5246). 7am–10pm Monday to Saturday. A sort of time machine that'll take you

back to 1911: colonial splendour everywhere and exceptional eating. Relax under the aircon or outside in a courtyard full of dappled shade.

The Sugar Club

(Beverly Hills Hotel, 1 Lighthouse Road, Umhlanga Rocks. 031 561 2211). Breakfast is from 7–10:30am, and your best bet is on a Sunday, for the lavish buffet selection. The menu is fresh but infused with the influence of Africa's colonial era and the Indian Ocean views add eye candy.

LEGENDS IN THEIR LUNCHTIME

Cargo Hold

(uShaka Marine World, 1 Bell Street, Point Waterfront. 031 328 8065). Take lunch from 12pm–3pm under the rude stares of passing sharks. The oyster platter's dizzying, and for novelty value, you can't beat a three-storey aquarium wall or the surrounding ship that houses the restaurant. Laugh at the fish while you eat their friends.

Manna

(40 Marriot Road, Morningside. 031 309 8581). 8:30am–4:30pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings. Relaxing ambience, with a tucked-away fountain courtyard and a light, healthy menu. Great place to re-gather. Oh, and ask about the Friday-evening sundowner sessions.

9th Avenue Bistro

(Shop 2, Avonmore Centre, 9th Avenue, Morningside. 031 312 9134). The connoisseur's lunchtime choice from 12pm–2:30pm (except Mondays) thanks to award winning chef Carly Goncalves, who caters to both classic and adventurous tastes. Just the place to book for those big family announcements (engagement, change of religion, etc.)

Aubergine & Andreotti's

(Hillcrest Centre, Old Main Road, Hillcrest. 031 765 6050). It's worth the trip – lunch is served from 12pm–3pm Monday to Friday. You'll have a lot of sumptuous specials to choose from and you'll enjoy the award-winning wine list.

WINE ME, DINE ME, CARRY ME HOME

Bean Bag Bohemia

(18 Windermere Road, Greyville. 031 309 6019). 9am till late every day. A magnet for the weird and wonderful, BBB has revamped itself more times than an ageing soap-opera star. It's a warren of eclectic art and fresh sounds. Choose from light bites downstairs or hold a dinner party upstairsh.

Café 1999

(Silvervaue Centre, cnr Silverton and Vause roads, Musgrave. 031 202 3406). 5:30pm–10:30pm Monday to Saturday; 12:30pm–2:30pm for lunch Monday to Friday. These guys have a winning formula: Café 1999 is a long-time hit with locals for it's delicious mini portions which allow you to sample two to three dishes in a sitting.

Fabulous Moroccan Restaurant

(37 St Thomas Road, Musgrave. 031 201 7292). 6pm till late, except Sundays. Rose daiquiris, sumptuous drapes and hookahs make this a unique night out. Baba ghanoush, shish kebabs and tender lamb make it authentically North African.

Mo Noodles

(275 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 312 4193). 6pm–10:30pm Monday to Saturday. Newly revamped, the ever-fresh Mo's has an awesome night-time terrace vibe, and delicious calamari, sesame seed prawn skewers and Thai green curry. Always book!

Pizzetta

(139 Davenport Road, Glenwood. 013 201 1019). 11:30am–10pm Tuesday to Sunday. The same owners as Café 1999 – and they can't seem to put a foot wrong. Pizzetta's part of the Glenwood revival on Davenport; enjoy pizza toppings right through from the conventional to dessert ingredients. Make that childhood dream of an ice-cream pizza come true!

Royal Grill

(Royal Hotel, 267 Smith Street. 031 333 6000). 6:30pm–11pm Monday to Saturday. This grand old dame offers continental French fare with gracious service and a varied wine list. Recently renovated, it's one of the last places in which to experience Durban's bygone era of vintage style.

THE UNDERBELLY

Cake and Satay

(Cnr Acacia and Willowvale Road, Umbilo. 082 716 3793). 4pm onwards, except Sundays. Leave the credit card at home and venture into Durban's hinterland for Indonesian cuisine. It's worth it, because while you might snicker at the garish décor, C&S's crab, prawns and Chinese fare make this a slow boat worth hopping into. Cash only.

Little Gujarat

(107 Prince Edward Street, Durban Central. 031 306 2272). 7am–5pm Monday to Friday. 7am–2pm on Saturdays, 8am–2pm on Sundays. This is a place where hungry manual labourers, German tourists, Nigerian students and Durban's Indians come to get a good curry. It's always busy and the food is always good – think authentic Indian curry, not fast food. The prices are incredibly low. It doesn't get much more Rainbow Nation than this.

Roma Revolving Restaurant

(John Ross House, Victoria Embankment. 031 337 6707). Dinner 6pm–10:30pm Monday to Saturday. Turns once an hour to give 360-degree views of the CBD and harbour and is especially glorious at sunset. The feel is 1970's Italian kitsch – wonderful and alarming at the same time. The main courses are rich but you don't have to be.

Vic Bar

(214 Point Road. 031 337 4645). Lunch and dinner Monday to Saturday. Point Road is the historic locale of all things saucy. Stop off at the old Vic for great-value Portuguese cuisine and a unique clientele of sailors, local eccentrics and traveller types. Weird and wonderful.

A PASSAGE THROUGH LITTLE INDIA

Palki

(225 Musgrave Road, Berea. 031 201 0019). Turn up the heat from 11am–1pm for lunch and 6pm–11pm for supper, Monday to Sunday, with authentic Gujarati cuisine. There's a lot on the veggie side, but the tandoori is also killer. Not a place to go for the décor or atmosphere, but you won't be worrying about those – the food's fabulous.

The Ulundi Room

(Royal Hotel, 267 Smith Street, Durban Central. 031 333 6000). 6pm–10:30pm Monday to Sunday – they do lunches too. We're back at the colonial-style Royal, this time for an authentic curry experience – if you like it hot, go for the southern Indian options, but if you're mild not wild, head for north Indian.

Vintage

(20 Windermere Road, Greyville. 031 309 1328). 12pm–3pm and 6pm–10:30pm, Monday to Sunday. Nestles on its weatherworn foundations like a fat pigeon on a hot day. The interior is cool and kitsch, and a great place to shelter from the humidity while you generate your own internal fire. Menu ranges from traditional north Indian to south Indian.

THE PARTY PEOPLE

Shame, new in town and Harry no friends? That's why our local sleuths have picked the best social spots for propping up the bar and meeting strangers who will show you a great time – then shave off your eyebrows while you snore on their futon.

Starters 4–6pm

Kick things off early and head to the beach for sundowners at Taco Zulu (Shop 4, 121 Lower Marine Parade, New Pier Beach. 031 368 7666). Tuck into some place Mexican cuisine with your beer – perfect for lining the stomach, party people! Staying right next to the Indian Ocean, head to Joe Cool's (North Beach. 031 332 9697) if you're a bikini bandit/babe. It's especially pumping on a hot Sunday afternoon, when toasted teens wander in off the beach. At eight it switches to nightclub mode and it's worth hanging around to see why they have all that padding on the walls next to the dance floor. If you want to get even closer to the water, make for the Beach Café (on the sand, Bay of Plenty beach, beachfront. 083 762 9223). Drinks, food, funky beats – all enjoyed while you bury your feet in the sand. Want something more swanky? Try Society (see restaurants) for cocktails under the palms.

In the mix 6–9pm

Cab over to Bean Bag Bohemia (see restaurants) – on Wednesdays it's a must for its crazy, loud cocktail sessions. You'll probably get talking to a backpacking Swede who's just opened a massage parlour in Kampala. Stuff like that always happens there. Taco Zulu (237 Florida Road. 031 303 9584) – the Florida Road one – is a good place to energise for the night too, with tacos and a few shooters in the upstairs bar. Basically any place on Florida Road is your best hangout at this stage, unless you want to trek out to Teazers (30 Aloefield Crescent, Springfield Park. 031 579 2407) for something completely under-dressed.

Once you've lost track of time...

You're ready to show that dance floor what's what. If you like it hard and heavy head for Burn (16 Walls Avenue, off Stamford Hill Road. 031 312 4268). It's a heavy cauldron of indie kids and rock honeys, and is famed for its well-supported live gigs. Jazzy Rainbow (93 Goble Road, Morningside. 031 303 8398) is one of the spots where

multi-racial mingling is par for the course. It's kind of jazz meets ethnic décor meets continental. If you want something more racy, head for Café Vacca Matta (Suncoast Casino on Battery Beach. 031 368 6535). It's for over 25's only, and you should dress to the max. Also pack a fat wallet. Also worth checking out is The Lounge (226 Stamford Hill Road. 031 303 9022). Durban's premier upmarket gay club. Happy 'hour' is from 6pm to 9pm, every night. Buy one – get one free! If you feel like hitting the dance floor head for Panama Room (178 Stamford Hill Road, Greyville. 031 312 5630). Durban's hippest clubbing venue offers up the latest house hits – gyrate the night away with the trendiest hedonists in town.

TALK SHOP!

Never mind the mall trawl, you can do that in your own time (and place). Yawn! If you must do it go to Gateway Theatre of Shopping. But there is something better – a couple of gems it would behoove you and your wallet to check out.

Cecil & Boyd's

(253 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 303 1005). 8:30am–5pm Monday to Friday, 9am–1pm on Saturdays. Take a stroll down Florida Road and check out these renowned designers' retail store. You'll find inspiring handmade homeware: furniture, fittings, artwork and miscellaneous objects. They have a distinctive style that blends international design with African influences. Be aesthetically pleased.

Ike's Bookshop

(48 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 303 9214). 10am–5pm Monday to Friday, 9am–2pm on Saturday. A book lover's paradise, where you'll find everything from a R10 000 first edition to that Mickey Spillane you remember reading as a kid. Don't tell everyone about it – it's too good for that.

Saint Verde

(398 Frere Road, Glenwood. 031 206 1795). 8:30am–4pm Monday to Friday, and 8:30am–1pm on Saturdays. Saint Verde rewards collectors of well-made, lovingly crafted, simply beautiful artefacts, from plush vintage sofas to quirky garden trowels. Nothing here is mass-produced.

The Space

(150 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 312 7556). 9am–5:30pm Monday to Friday, and 8am–4pm on Saturday. The Space houses fresh fashion from leading local designers like Amanda Laird Cherry and Colleen Eitzen; they also import books, toys, gewgaws and novelties from Europe and the East. In a word: unique.

Victoria Street Market

(Cnr Queen and Victoria streets, Durban Central, 6am–5pm Monday to Saturday, Sunday 10am–3pm). Basement parking is available; check out the vast array of Indian, African and Oriental spices, fresh fish, ceramics, brassware, curry powders and everything else. It's a riot!

CULTURE VULTURES

You don't have to go to London to be in the know, you know. Durban has its share of enriching, invigorating experiences – you just have to know where to look i.e. in this very guide. Get arty.

African Art Centre

(94 Florida Road, Morningside. 031 312 3804/5). 8:30am–5pm Monday to Friday, and 9am–3pm on Saturday. Don't be fooled by cheap imitations: check out authentic traditional and modern Zulu and Xhosa artefacts, beadwork, baskets, sculpture etc. Time and money well spent.

Durban Art Gallery

(City Hall, Smith Street. 031 311 2264). 8:30am–4pm Monday to Sunday. 11am–4pm on Sundays. Home to a massive collection of over 3 500 artworks of indigenous origin, as well as some of SA's biggest names and a selection of masterworks dating back to the 15th century, including Chinese ceramics and Rodin bronzes. Score!

Grey Street Mosque

(Cnr Grey and Queen streets. 031 306 0026). This is – how's this – the largest mosque in the southern hemisphere and boasts a floor area of 972m² as well as the capacity to hold about 4 500 worshippers. Approach with due respect and perhaps phone before swinging by, to find out about preferred dress and conduct.

Hare Krishna Temple of Understanding

(Florence Nightingale Drive, Chatsworth. 031 403 3328). 10:30am–7pm Monday to Sunday. The ornate meditation room and laid-back vegetarian restaurant make this an otherworldly experience. Certainly one of SA's most astonishing temples, and yes, extremely enlightening.

The Golden Mile

(on the beachfront). Make for North Beach and walk (or ride, regally in a ricksha) in a southerly direction. You'll find stall after stall of affordable and traditional Zulu and African crafts. Stock up on gifts for the unlucky folks back home, then go and lie on the sand.

The Playhouse Company

(231 Smith Street, Durban Central. 031 369 9555). Durban's home of grandiose, traditional theatre. If you're in town at the right time, you might catch a Hamlet or My Fair Lady. Really gives you that feeling of going back to an era when cinema wasn't all that.

NB INFO – IN CASE OF CAT UP TREE, HURRICANE, JELLYFISH ATTACK, ETCETERA...

Emergency

Police 10111

Ambulance 10177

Fire and ambulance 031 361 0000

Sea Rescue 031 337 2200

Money

American Express Foreign Exchange Service 031 301 5541 / 031 301 0234 (after hours)

Rennies Travel and Foreign Exchange Regional Office 031 307 2625

Transport

Durban International Airport 031 451 6758 (helpdesk) +27 31 451 6758 (if calling from outside South Africa)

Taxi: Zippy Cabs 031 202 7067 / 031 202 7068

Mynah Bus 031 309 4126

Tourism KwaZulu Natal 031 366 7500 (after hours: 031 305 6693)

Medical

Entabeni Hospital 031 204 1300 / 031 563 8483

Emergency Chemist 031 207 3946 (after hours: 031 563 8483)

Telephone

Country code 027

Area code 031 (all calls to numbers in Durban, even local calls, require this code).

Other

Time zone GMT +2

Area 2 292 km²

Population 3 346 799

Websites www.wheretostay.co.za

www.yellowpages.co.za

www.durban.cityguidesa.com