



HARTENBOS – a celebration of local culture

Hartenbos is the destination of choice for thousands of holiday-makers every summer. A large portion of Hartenbos forms part of the Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV) Beach Resort.

Collect shells along the 5 km blue flag beach, or walk along the 2 km promenade along the coastline, that features Afrikaans poetry 'stones'. Photograph the birdlife at the Hartenbos River estuary, or try your hand at fishing between Hartenbos and Little Brak River.

The Hartenbos Boeremark, held in front of the Carney building, usually on the second and last Saturdays of the month, is a treat. During school holidays, there are permanent stalls on the sidewalks.

Museums

See a real ox-wagon at the Hartenbos Museum, then pop in at the Janine Ironing and Laundry Museum – dedicated specifically to the history of this everyday household chore.

Station

Board the Diaz Express for a fun rail experience. Depart from Hartenbos Station and go on an excursion to Santos beach, Little Brak River or Great Brak River.

MOSSSEL BAY – explore the town by foot

If history is your forté, Mossel Bay's array of beautiful sandstone buildings will enchant you. Most of the sandstone used in these magnificent buildings came from the old quarry at the Point.

Put on your walking shoes, collect a brochure at the tourism info office and start your tour from here. The brochure highlights nearly 70 historic buildings, which were built between 1786 and the early 1900s.

At the start of your tour is the Granary, built in 1786/7 to store grain brought in by farmers until there was enough for a shipload. The building was demolished in 1951, but reconstructed in 1987. It is part of the Dias Museum complex.

Close by you will find the Ochre Barn and the original municipal buildings that later doubled up as dance hall, library, auction house, stage coach stop and telegraph office. Today the old Municipal building houses the Craft Art Workshop.

The Prince, Vintcent & Co. building in Bland Street has a large arch, which originally allowed ox-wagons to enter the building to offload goods.

These snippets are just to get you going. If you would like to find out more about Mossel Bay's yesteryears, visit the Photo Expo, housed in the old carpenters shop in Montagu Street (behind the taxi rank).



THE HARBOUR WALL – explore Quay 4

Mossel Bay's endless kilometers of sandy beaches and balmy waters is a firm favorite with residents, as well as tourists and holiday makers.

A new addition is the exciting hub of activities on the harbour wall, Quay 4.

Enjoy a meal at the Sea Gypsy restaurant. Enjoy the amazing view while you feed the seagulls and enjoy 'the friendliest, funkiest spot in town with the freshest hake'. Other dishes are also available on the menu.

Take a stroll and discover a bright red double decker topless bus – the London Bus Fish & Chips Company. Here you can indulge in freshly baked crisp hake, calamari and chips. Reviews on Tripadvisor rate the food as the best in town, and the most reasonably priced. Take it away or enjoy the breathtaking view from the top deck.

Right next door is another seafood outlet, The Mossel Bay Oyster Bar, where sparkling wine and oysters are served, as well as a wide variety of sushi. Sit inside or enjoy the fresh air on the deck.

Check out Kaai4 braai restaurant for traditional South African food. The menu includes spitbraais, braaivleis, potjiekos and freshly baked roosterkoek, made on an open fire and enjoyed informally at sleeper wood tables.

The last restaurant on this stretch is the Café on the Bay, located inside the Mossel Bay Yacht and Boat Club, where you can enjoy a light lunch or drink. Just ring the bell at the gate.

The harbour wall is also abuzz with Things to Do activities. Try some scuba diving or snorkelling at Electrodrive or do a deep sea fishing trip with Go Fish.

During holiday season, the adrenaline pumping Waverider is a firm favourite, but if you prefer a leisurely cruise, you can take a trip around Seal Island or a sunset cruise with either the Romonza or the Seven Seas. Romonza, which has been operational for more than 25 years, is the official whale watching boat in this area. Trips are done on a regular basis during the day.



MOSSSEL BAY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT – an eclectic fusion

Mossel Bay has two roads running parallel to the Point – visitors' and locals' favourite place to hang out. Both Marsh and Bland Street have a wealth of beautiful sandstone buildings and history, which fuses with more modern elements.

Several streets connect the two and Cuff Street has been transformed into a strolling and meeting area. Around the corner, in an amazing stone building, is the brand new The Merchant coffee shop.

A number of buildings have their roots embedded in the railway history. The Goods Shed indoor market, a 1902 historic sandstone building at the harbour entrance, was once used as a workshop. Today this landmark is once again a hub of activity, with 80 shops selling a variety of quality products.

Down the road is the Blue Shed Coffee Roastery. This eclectic coffee shop used to be an old workshop for railroad trucks. The long table, that forms a focal point, covers a pit where the mechanics could work under the trucks. Further down the road is Bizzare Bazaar, a culture shock of kitsch, eclectic, outdated and special finds. A large collection of 35mm films in their tin containers is available for movie lovers.

The Monroe Theatre in Marsh Street regularly screens old classics, as part of a dinner theatre concept. This venue is adjacent to Deja Vu, which specialises in anything vintage.

The lower part of Marsh Street has a wealth of interesting art shops, antique havens, eateries and watering holes. Pop in for coffee at The Coffee Club, Fynbos, Arabesque and Coffee@Work or visit Delicious Cakes on the corner of Field and Marsh Street.

So don your walking shoes and start exploring!



FRIEMERSHEIM – follow the scent of lavenders

Follow the Fragrance Route towards Friemersheim, a small agricultural community about 15 km from Great Brak River.

The town can be reached via Long Street, past the Great Brak River Museum (also worth a visit). On your way you will also pass a lion farm and two private game reserves.

The town has a magnificent 1884 Cape Dutch inspired church. The only slave quarters originally serving Great Brak lies at the intersection of the roads leading into Friemersheim. The original famous Volkswyn chairs were made here before being moved to Cape Town. On the main road, you can buy sweets or eggs at the tiniest Spaza shop around, Auntie Pop's.

A massive lavender project sustains this small community. Farmers grow the flowers in their own gardens. In season, fresh stems are distributed and sold across the Southern Cape, and entrepreneurs also make value added products such as infused soaps, candles and biscuits.



GREAT BRAK RIVER: Stok en Hoed – short village walks

Explore the beautiful town of Great Brak River on foot. Grab a map at the tourism office at The Dekke, which gives you a choice of seven Short Village walks.

• 103 Steps Walk

This route takes you from Peperboom Restaurant in Long Street to the beautiful '103 Steps' garden in Sandhoogte Road, and back. This private land art garden is open to the public and its main attraction is a labyrinth.

• Vleiland & Nature Walk

Explore the bird and plantlife of Great Brak River by embarking on this hike. It starts at the Ellen van Rensburg Library in Long Street and takes you through marshlands, past water furrows and a small heritage cottage named 'Die Roodak Huisie'.

• History Walk

Take a walk back in time and see the heritage home, Fairholm, the Searle Memorial Church and Westbank. You'll also pass the Great Brak River Museum and Bolton's Shoe Factory – home of Grasshopper shoes. The factory shop is open to the public.

• Pepper Tree Walk

The widest pepper tree in South Africa (11.2 m) can be seen on this route. You'll also pass Belhambra House (Post Office), the old Bioscope, two local church buildings, the original factory workers' cottages, as well as a Hydro-Electrical pump house.

• The Southern Cross Walk

Walk through the suburb of Southern Cross, starting at De Dekke. Pass the beach and can go for a quick dip too, if you wish.

• The Island Walk

Explore The Island by crossing a single lane wooden bridge – still the original – that connects The Island to the mainland. This suburb has an abundance of indigenous milkwood trees.

• The Circle Walk

The trail involves walking around the river and village along Long Street and Station Road, crossing the two bridges at either end of the village.



DANA BAY – flora and fauna on your doorstep

The suburb of Dana Bay is located on the outskirts of Mossel Bay and a protected conservancy. The Conservancy supports one of the highest numbers of endemic species in the Cape Floristic Region and a variety of wild animals also call it their home.

Dana Bay has three sand beaches with many fishing spots and dunes to climb, or you can explore the rock formations on the beach during low tide.

At First Beach you can start the St Blaize hiking trail towards the lighthouse at the Point. This 13.5 km hike is marked with the sign of the Oystercatcher. Remember to wear hiking shoes, hat, sunscreen and bring plenty of water.



MIDBRAK – a hidden gem

Nestled between Little and Great Brak River, Midbrak offers a plethora of interesting attractions and places of interest. For the hikers, there is a two hour long 10 km walk along the beach – preferably during low tide. Along the way, stop for a bite at Seeplaas, which also showcases the art of Ken Maloney. Seeplaas is accessible from the beach, as well as the R102 just outside Great Brak River. This road also leads to the famous De Vette Mossel restaurant. Here you can dig into mouthwatering seafood while your toes are buried in the sand.

Little Brak River boasts a number of famous enterprises. Koeksister Queen Laetitia van Zyl's 'koeksisters' have even featured on national television, while many South Africans enjoy a Onz Bakhuisk rusk with their morning coffee.

Make sure you visit Cool Bay at the Klipheuvel padstal, just off the N2 for a range of Portugese wines, as well as locally produced organic vegetables and baked goods. Just around the corner you'll find Cape Oysters, which are unique in shape and taste, but worth trying a sample.

