

OUT OF Africa

From spectacular sunsets to breaching whales, **Ciara Leahy** finds that a trip to Cape Town shouldn't be missed

Whales breaching, elephants plodding along, cute little penguins and delicious food at very reasonable prices – it's no wonder that Cape Town is a once-in-a-lifetime trip that you want to take over and over again. So, where to start? Well before we began our exploration, it was time to rest our travelled legs.

Numerous people recommended the Camps Bay neighbourhood as the place to stay – a no-brainer, we were told. Fantastic beaches, excellent restaurants, a really buzzing town just 10 minutes from the city centre. It was dark when we got to Camps Bay though and we were a bit surprised when our GPS directed us past the buzzing town towards our hotel. We followed the road up the mountain, and then up further the mountain, and then I began to wonder if we were in the wrong place. However, the minute we walked into the Atlantic View boutique hotel, it was clear we were in heaven.

The small hotel is up above Camps Bay for a reason as the view of the twinkling lights below is quite breathtaking. A quiet night in the hotel lounge followed, complete with complimentary wine and canapés. But the real surprise was to come the next morning. The curtains opened on the floor-to-ceiling windows and there below us was the most fantastic view of the Atlantic, the waves crashing to the sea, the yellow sandy beach, a view that simply couldn't be achieved without being elevated above the shoreline.

The hotel doesn't have a restaurant but that was perfectly fine by us, as we were served a seriously impressive continental and hot breakfast in our room the following morning. No need to get out of our dressing gowns and with a view like that – it was a surprise we left the hotel at all. However, after a dip in their infinity pool and a cheeky snack of some amazing prawn and lobster cocktail (it would be rude not to), we were off to explore the city and see just what makes Cape Town such a popular tourist destination.



The cable car from Table Mountain back down to Cape Town.



The Atlantic View Hotel

A NEW DAY

The order of the day was Table Mountain, the ultimate viewpoint of Cape Town and now one of the new Seven Wonders of Nature. Some people don the hiking boots and climb their way to the top. The lazier child in us got a kick from speeding to the top in the cable car, which rotates so you can see every view of the city from the more industrial side to the beaches on the east, although nothing quite beats the magnificent view at the top. Be careful to plan your trip for a nice clear day, as the clouds can obstruct your views. If you're really brave, you can abseil back down again.

The V&A Waterfront is also a must-stop on your travels around Cape Town. This is where you'll