



“My Octopus Teacher” Oscar win great boost for South Africa

The Oscar-winning documentary celebrates South Africa’s biodiversity, the 3rd most biodiverse country on Earth, and home to the only place in the world where the Marine Big five (Southern Right Whales, Dolphins, Great White Sharks, Cape Fur Seals and African penguins) are all in close proximity to the shore.

4th May 2021 South Africa has an abundance of marine bio-diversity - it is home to many endemic species and thousands of kilometres of kelp forest - and through the Netflix documentary “My Octopus Teacher”, millions of viewers around the world can see just how amazing and how beautiful, South Africa’s unique ocean life is.

My Octopus Teacher won an Oscar in the Best Documentary Feature Category at the 93rd Academy Awards in Los Angeles on 25th April. The nomination came just a few days after SA Tourism’s announcement of its recently engaged in a partnership agreement with Netflix South Africa that focusses on promoting the country through local productions.

The documentary is set in the **False Bay** area in Cape Town, Western Cape province, and focusses on the intimate relationship between independent film maker, Craig Foster, and an Octopus, coming together in the Atlantic Ocean. The False Bay area in Cape Town is home to the South Africa’s largest Naval Base in Simonstown and also features fishing harbours, beaches, yacht clubs, coastal nature reserves and the famous Boulders Beach, home to the gorgeous African penguins.

According to the consumer study done by South African Tourism and YouGov* last month, “scenic beauty” is the main reason for considering South Africa according to 73% of respondents, followed by “wildlife and safari” (66%) and “history and culture” (53%). With an abundance of beautiful natural landscapes, vast national parks full of wildlife and secluded rugged coastline South Africa offers an ideal destination, tapping into the growing demand for space and seclusion. The country’s welcoming locals and diverse cultural heritage makes the destination a perfect choice for those seeking heartfelt connections with the locals, vibrant and diverse culture and meaningful travel for their post-pandemic holiday.



DISCOVER THE WHALE COAST ROUTE

300-KILOMETER SCENIC COASTAL DRIVING ROUTE THAT SNAKES FROM CAPE TOWN TO GANSBAAI

Boulder's Beach Penguin Colony: Cape Town boasts some of the most fantastic activities and experiences and one of the most unique of these is visiting the African Penguin colony, residing at Boulder's Beach in False Bay. These local residents can be found just one (very scenic) hour drive from Cape Town city centre, on the way to Cape Point Peninsula. The drive on Chapman's Peak allows travellers to take in sweeping views of Hout bay, past Noordhoek and Kommetjie and finally reaching the African Penguin's home of Boulder's Beach.

The colony is estimated to have around 2,500 – 3,000 birds often spotted sunbathing on the boulders or riding the waves in the protected bay. As well as an ideal place to see the penguins up close, the beach is a great spot for a refreshing dip and a picnic to round up a beautiful day. There is a R65 conservation fee (around £3.50) and it is very rarely packed. For entry and exit times, see here

https://www.sanparks.org/parks/table_mountain/tourism/get_there.php

The unquestionable surfer's paradise: Muizenberg beach, famous for its colourful beach huts, it is also the perfect place to learn to surf. This is not only because it is situated on the Indian Ocean side of Cape Town, so its waters are a bit warmer, but also because it has a sand bottom and gentle rolling waves, perfect for beginner surfers. There are a number of surf schools to choose from, including **Gary's Surf School**, the oldest surf school in the country.

<https://garysurf.com/>

Muizenberg to Kalk Bay: a Coastal Stroll AUDIO TOUR : Travellers can take the Kalk Bay Audio tour with Maggie Follett, a proud local, freelance journalist, poetry scribbler and occasional filmmaker as your guide. This popular route takes you on a gentle but bracing stroll around the spectacular curve of False Bay, from the laid-back coastal suburb of Muizenberg (the gateway to the South Peninsula), via beautiful St James, to the vibey, bustling village and harbour of Kalk Bay. Distance from Cape Town to Kalk Bay: 30,7 km (around 35 minutes).

<https://voicemap.me/tour/cape-town/muizenberg-to-kalk-bay-a-coastal-stroll>

African Penguin and Sea Bird Sanctuary (APSS): Based near Dyer Island and situated 8.5 Km from Kleinbaai harbour in Gansbaai, APSS is home to over 29 bird species including one of the largest colonies of the endangered African Penguin in the Western Cape. The organisation is devoted to nursing injured and sick seabirds back to health before releasing them back into the wild. Visitors can visit APSS for free when booking with Dyer Island Cruises.

<https://www.whalewatchsa.com/african-penguin-and-seabird-sanctuary/>



Shark Cage-diving: 'Shark Alley', a narrow channel between the penguin home of Dyer Island and a six-thousand strong colony of Cape Fur Seals, is one of the best areas in South Africa for shark cage diving. For travellers looking for safari action on the open water, there's no better place. Visitors preferring to watch from the safety of the boat certainly won't miss out on any of the action, as the sharks remain just under the surface of the water and come right up to the boat. During peak season, between June and September, onboard spectators may also see Great Whites breaching. <https://www.sharkcagediving.co.za>

Whale watching & Walking Trails: Whale-watching along the Gansbaai coast and Hermanus are also excellent, particularly between May and December, when southern right whales come to mate, calve and nurse their young in the area. There are also numerous hikes and walking trails around the cliffs of De Kelders at Gansbaai, which feature caves to explore, abundant fynbos, spectacular ocean views and the fascinating history of ancient peoples in this area, revealed by archaeological digs that deliver rich hauls of prehistoric artefacts regularly. <https://www.gansbaai-info.co.za/town>

Pippa Ehrlich, Film Director

"I feel like I'm in a dream, very excited and very motivated and incredibly grateful that everything has worked out the way it has. It's very hard to explain you know, we started off with this tiny team really just Craig and I with an edit suite in his attic, but what we did have is one of the most exquisitely beautiful environments on Earth that the world hadn't really seen before. It's been an enormous privilege to be able to show that to the world."

South Africa's a very special country from coast to mountain. Cape Town itself is just an incredibly beautiful place also an incredibly diverse place, you have Table Mountain, you have indigenous forest and then you have this wealth marine life where you can see orcas and seals and penguins and whales and dolphins all on the same day and octopuses, massive invertebrate bio-diversity".

Kgomotso Ramothea, Acting Hub Head at South African Tourism for the UK & Ireland:

"We are delighted to see South Africa's biodiversity being so well showcased in My Octopus Teacher and a huge congratulations to the production team and cast for representing South Africa with such passion and joy. We hope Netflix viewers will enjoy watching the splendour and beauty of our oceans and to agree with *producer, Pippa Ehrlich*, when she said the documentary is showing to the world "one of the most exquisitely beautiful environments on Earth that the world hadn't really seen before"".



We hope that the UK ban on international travel to South Africa is lifted from 17 May. If so, and following a successful vaccine rollout in South Africa which began earlier this month and a continued decline in new COVID-19 cases, we are hopeful that we'll be able to welcome visitors in time for the South African summer season and look forward to working with the UK travel trade to ensure the success of South Africa's tourism recovery".

-Ends-

Note to editors

***Survey Results:** All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,094 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th - 15th March 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

South African Tourism is the national tourism agency responsible for the marketing of South Africa as a preferred tourist and business events destination. For further information and high-res images please contact:

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South African Tourism recently caught up with My Octopus Teacher producer, Pippa Ehrlich. Click on the below links to hear more about this amazing documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbE4Sws773vz3ATosb2T9K8tqBMeRbQkQ>

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<https://vandam.netflix.com/shares/a05040b5349a4336966caa8f1b41f5e2>

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