

7 safety tips to make the most out of your time on Table Mountain

Exploring Table Mountain in Cape Town is a must for anyone visiting the city; even for those from the city. The upcoming long weekends present the opportunity to do so, however, it's important to stay safe while exploring the New7Wonder of Nature.

Wahida Parker, the managing director of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC), says that with more people wanting to explore the mountain, it is important that everyone takes all the necessary precautions to ensure that they put their safety first.

“ No matter how experienced a person may be, unexpected things can and do happen in a rugged terrain. The more prepared you are when exploring Table Mountain and other nature reserves the more likely you are going to have a good experience,” Parker adds. ”

Some of the trails, such as the India Venster and Nursery Ravine, can be very technical, which are often only recommended for experienced outdoor enthusiasts and hikers. Some of the other hiking trails which require some level of preparedness are Platteklip Gorge, Skeleton Gorge and the Kasteelspoort. With several dangerous cliffs and ravines, a misplaced foot can easily lead to an injury. So, it is always best to plan where you go and who you do it with.

Rising more than 1,000 meters above sea level, weather on the mountain can change very quickly. If unprepared, fluctuating temperatures or a strong gust of wind can easily catch you off guard.



It is not just the weather and tricky footpaths that can put you at risk. Parker points out that unsavoury characters are known to take advantage of the cover that the bushes, shrubs, trees and caves provide, to pounce on unsuspecting individuals.

Parker says to reduce your risks of being accosted, it is important to always stay alert of your surroundings. “To help reduce your risks, it’s best to leave your valuable items such as your wallet and jewellery at home. If you must bring your cell phone or smartwatch, keep them out of sight.”

Parker adds that TMAACC, SANParks, Cape Town Tourism, the City of Cape Town and Law Enforcement agencies will continue to work together to help keep the mountain safe for visitors. This includes state-of-the-art CCTV cameras that are fixed at strategic locations in certain areas of the park to help cast a wider security net over large swathes of Cape Town’s iconic landmark.

Here are a few basic safety tips to make sure your experience is a safe and memorable one:

- **The Hikers Network’s Safety Mountain Tracking App:** A tool to help keep you safe is the tracking app, a WhatsApp-based service that tracks users, so they remain along the approved SANParks routes.
- **Dress appropriately:** With winter around the corner, it will soon get wet and windy. Dress warmly, wear comfortable shoes for balance as it can get slippery when it rains. Layer your clothes.
- **Keep your eyes on the time:** Take note of the shorter days, as it usually gets darker a bit earlier. Plan your walks or hikes carefully and make sure that by the time it gets dark you are in a safe place.
- **Obey the rules:** Stay on the route. Respect restricted areas and do not take risks, even for that perfect Instagram picture. Stick to the designated paths and follow the signposts to avoid getting lost.
- **Go in groups:** Avoid hiking alone. It is best to go in groups of four or more as an extra safety precaution.
- **Tell someone about your plans:** If you’re planning on hiking, tell someone. This way, if you get stuck or lost, people will know where to look for you first.
- **Stay hydrated:** Carry enough water to stay hydrated and take snacks with you.

For more information, visit www.tablemountain.net