


Pretoria Holiday Highlights

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Words: Betsie Loock-Van der Merwe Images: Supplied

In December, the quieter streets of Pretoria pose the perfect opportunity for residents to play tourist in their own city. Here are the things you should have on your bucket list for a memorable stay-cation or visit to the beautiful Jacaranda City.



Something different at the zoo

A must do is a sunset safari at the National Zoological Gardens Pretoria from 6:30pm – 11:30pm. Enjoy a guided one-hour walking safari and on your return the braai fires will be ready, or book a sleepover which include the aforesaid, plus you may camp in the zoo for one night.

Adventure

Kick-start your holiday with an adrenaline-filled, aerial, tree-top adventure at one of Acrobranch's adventure parks in Pretoria North, Pretoria East and Centurion. The concept offers kids, adults and teenagers excitement and fun as they move from tree to tree in lush green forests. Challenges include tree-top high ropes and crossings with ladders, tunnels, walkways and bridges as well as impressive zip lines.

More adventure: CryWolf Paintball, The Climbing Barn, Horseback Africa & Walking with Lions, Zwartkop Raceway Go Karts



A good old picnic

Let go of the year's stresses and strains at one of the lovely picnic spots on offer. Put some effort in the planning of a special picnic basket filled with your favourite eats and drinks. Spread your blanket in the shade at The Sammy Marks Museum terrain and enjoy an interesting guided tour of the historic house as well.

More picnics spots: Pretoria Botanical Gardens, Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserve, Faerie Glen Nature Reserve, Rietvlei Nature Reserve, Wonderboom Nature Reserve



At fresco kids

Treat the kids to their own special day at Cedar Junction train theme park and take the trip around the scenic park with them. There are pedal boats (seasonal), swimming pools with slides, jumping castles, trampolines, jungle gyms, sandpits and a mini bike track.

More outdoor fun: Bester Birds and Animal Zoo Park, Irene Farm, Big Red Barn, Pretoria Zoo, Wave Pool Forest Hill City

Indoors kids

The Fun Company at Menlyn Park and The Grove shopping centres offers hours of indoor fun activities, like arcade games, bowling, mini-golf, bumper cars and much more.

More indoor activities: Ice Rink at The Grove, Bounce trampoline park, Imax movies at The Grove, Go Play kids indoor play centre, Go Karts at Kolonnade Centre



Landmarks

The nine-metre high bronze statue of Nelson Mandela at the foot of the notorious Union Buildings, the seat of government, was unveiled in December 2013. At the same time The Union Buildings celebrated its centenary and was declared a national heritage site. The historic buildings offer spectacular views of the city.

More: Freedom Park cultural institution, Voortrekker Monument – the most visited heritage site in Gauteng, Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square in Mamelodi, Church Square, City Hall



Museums

Pretoria is home to a myriad of interesting museums, forts, historic buildings and beautiful old churches. A must visit is the Ditsong Natural Museum of Cultural History which include exhibitions of the San people, Iron Age figurines and an art gallery presenting an overview of South African culture through time.

More museums: Melrose House, SAPS Museum, Kruger House, Jan Smuts House, Pioneer Museum

Nature

Rietvlei Dam Nature Reserve offers a lovely family outing, as well as opportunities for game viewing, hiking, fishing, and birding. Camping is also possible, and the Rietvlei Coffee Shop is accommodated in the historic farmstead.

More nature: Groenkloof Nature Reserve, Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary, Farm Inn, Dinokeng Game Reserve



Where to eat

- Experience Pretoria's top-rated Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient. This modern fine-dining restaurant boasts the ownership of the renowned and award-winning South African chef Chantel Dartnell.
- More fine dining: Fermier, Forti Grill & Bar, Kream, Geet Indian Restaurant, Black Bamboo
- Great everyday gourmet: Burger Bistro, Mustang Sally, Crowdaddy's, Railways Café Irene, Capital Craft Beer Academy
- Popular pubs: Baracas Groenkloof, Whisk Wine Bar, Lucky Rodrigo, Cool Runnings, Summit Grill & Skye Bar

Where to sleep

Romantic Getaways

- Lombardy Boutique Hotel and Spa
- Villa Sterne Boutique Hotel and Health Spa
- Mooiplaatsie Country Estate – unique décor
- Ndlovu Lodge – an African bush escape
- Kievitskroon Country Estate and Spa

Closer to the city

- Protea Fire & Ice, Menlyn
- The Sheraton Pretoria Hotel, Arcadia
- Casa Toscana Lodge, Lynnwood Manor
- Centurion Lake Hotel, Centurion waterfront
- Court Classique City Hotel, Arcadia

In the countryside

- African Pride Irene Country Lodge, Irene
- Kwalata Lodge, Dinokeng Game Reserve
- Zebra Country Lodge, Cullinan
- Bentley's Country Lodge, Pretoria North
- Villa San Giovanni, Wonderboom area

