



Holiday highlights

Pretoria has a lot on offer as a tourist city for both residents and visitors to the Jacaranda City

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THE RED BARN



THE RIETVLEI NATURE RESERVE

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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 to 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.

Action 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; and Zwartkops 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. Find more picnic spots at the Pretoria Botanical Gardens; Moreleta Kloof Nature Reserve; Faerie Glen Nature Reserve; Rietvlei Nature Reserve; and Wonderboom Nature Reserve.

Al 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 is available at Bester Birds and Animal Zoo Park; Irene Farm; Big Red Barn; Pretoria Zoo; and Wave Pool Forest Hill City.

Indoors kids

The Fun Company at Menlyn Park and The Grove shopping centres offer hours of indoor fun activities, like arcade games, bowling, mini-golf, bumper cars and much more. Also consider these for indoor activities: Ice Rink at The Grove; Bounce trampoline park; Imax movies at The Grove; Go Play kids indoor play centre and Go Karts at Kolonnade Centre

Landmarks

The nine-metre high bronze statue of Nelson Mandela at the foot of the 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. Also don't miss these landmarks: Freedom Park cultural institution; Voortrekker Monument – the most visited heritage site in Gauteng; Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square in Mamelodi; Church Square; and the City Hall.

Museums

Pretoria is home to a myriad 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 and overview of South African culture through time. Also see Melrose House, the SAPS Museum, Kruger House, Jan Smuts House, and the 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. If the outdoors are your thing, also consider the Groenkloof Nature Reserve, Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary, Farm Inn, and the Dinokeng Game Reserve