

## Hermanus Areas

Hermanus finds itself cradled in Walker Bay, a large inlet stretching from Danger Point (Gansbaai) in the east to Mudge Point (Betty's Bay) in the west. On a narrow coastal strip between mountain and sea lie the eight diverse communities of Greater Hermanus (Fisherhaven, Hawston, Vermont, Onrus, Sandbaai, Zwelihle, Hermanus and Voëlklip).

In addition to spectacular natural beauty and the best whale watching in the world, Hermanus and surrounds literally bristles with shops, restaurants and accommodation establishments. Its two harbours (historical & fishing), pristine beaches, cliff paths and nature reserve mean there is always ample to keep even the most demanding visitor busy.

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On the R43 lie the charming villages of Vermont and Onrus River. Well known artists and writers such as Uys Krige, Gregoire Boonzaaier, Jan Rabie, Marjorie Wallace, Jack Cope, Cecil Higgs, Audrey Fourie and Hennie Niemann settled in Onrus and Vermont years ago, giving the area the status of an artists' colony. Many other artists, working in a wide variety of media and practicing diverse art forms, have since established themselves in Hermanus and its surrounds. Vermont is known for its birdlife and green belt, bordering the nature reserve. Quiet and beautiful with bird eyes views of both mountain and sea. Amazing Brêkvis Bay with surrounding dunes is an ideal place for a picnic.

Originally built around the lagoon, Onrus is a peaceful holiday retreat, which in recent years expanded to include shopping, galleries and cosy, romantic eating places, while still retaining its old charm. The lagoon offers safe bathing for young and old alike and is very popular during the summer holidays, as is the short stretch of beach. The beach is also a favourite spot for surfers. This suburb plays host to the annual Hermanus Times Kalfiefee during August, which brings a cultural experience to the local community. Every first Saturday of the month there is an arts and crafts market in the De Wetsaal in Roos Street.

Walking the cliff paths is idyllic and the chances of spotting whales from July &ndash; December adds its own magic. Most of the coastline at Onrus and Vermont are rocky and wild.

There is a fairly even mix of holiday and permanently inhabited homes in Sandbaai and this is where many of the younger generation of permanent inhabitants live. Starting to show business growth, Sandbaai still has some gravel roads. Dog friendly.

Zwelihle is the former 'black' township of Hermanus and visitors can sample the unique lifestyle of its residents by joining one of the very popular township tours, which is run in association with the local tourism bureau.

Sprawled around the central business district are the older, tree-lined residential suburbs of Westcliff (new harbour), Northcliff (close to schools) and Eastcliff (next to golf course and gym). Kwaiwater, Hermanus Heights and Fernkloof (bordering Fernkloof Nature Reserve) adjoining them. Fernkloof residential area offers old and established homes that are very upmarket. The gardens in Fernkloof Nature Reserve are an ideal place to have a picnic, take gentle walks, and learn about the traditional uses of some local plants in the herb garden. There is also a mountain biking trail.

Every Saturday morning from 08:00 &ndash; 11:00, weather permitting, Fernkloof market offers organic bread, olives, fresh coffee and other treats. Go early.

At the easternmost extreme of Hermanus, at the foot of the Klein River Mountains, lies Voëlklip, home to the two most popular beaches in the area, namely Voëlklip and Grotto.

Although not part of Greater Hermanus, Stanford is a charming village lying on the banks of the Klein River. There are more than 120 bird species known to be indigenous to the area. A trip down the Klein River is ideal for bird watching. The Klein River is also ideally suited to boating, canoeing and swimming. Stanford host several acclaimed pubs and restaurants as well as a brewery. The Klein River Cheese factory is nearby for picnics and tasting.

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