

CAPE TOWN TRIP – SEPTEMBER 2006



Hein planned a business trip to Cape Town and I tagged along. We decided to fly from Lanseria Airport and what a bliss it turned out to be. We had to be there by 6am, but since the airport is only a few km's away from our home in Randburg, that was no problem at all.

The airport is quite smallish, so there's not a lot of people milling around and the whole building is very clean. If you like to look at small aeroplanes, the Wings Restaurant on the 1st floor serves food from 5:30am – 21:00pm and on a Saturday & Sunday from 6:30am – 18:00pm. They have a really nice selection of “pub meals” to enjoy while watching the planes.

We arrived at the departure lounge of Kulula Airlines and what a surprise – there were 2 Kulula personnel handing out coffee with a smile. The flight was less than 2 hours (plus the rates were very good) and we breakfasted on a lovely beef wrap (Hein) and a smoked chicken and basil pesto croissant (me) with coffee – unfortunately, Hein's coffee landed on his jeans. Although you have to pay for the snacks and drinks, the quality is really excellent.



By 9am, Tuesday, we were in Cape Town! I found this guesthouse in Bantry Bay, Avanti (www.avanti.co.za) and arranged to book in early. The room had a nice spacious balcony with wrought-iron furniture looking out onto the sea and Johan and Mari are a retired couple, speak French and treated us like family.

I unpacked, Hein changed his coffee-smelling jeans and we hopped in the car to have lunch at the Waterfront. Fish and chips!

Fisherman's Choice is a restaurant cum take-away shop – meaning that you have to order at the counter. Hein ordered hake and rice (R44-95!!!), calamari and rice (R33-95) for myself and salad. What a complete rip-off! And please explain to me – how can hake be more expensive than calamari?



Quite disappointed, we returned to the guesthouse for a little rest. We arranged to meet some friends at the new Tyger Waterfront for some business talks and armed with my windbreaker, we chose a restaurant called Amici's. (www.amicirestaurants.com)



It's quite a nice venue – not so packed with people and we even saw a crab on the wooden platform!

While Hein was talking business, I had a look at the menu. It was after 4 by now and the hake and calamari long forgotten!

Amici is an Italian restaurant with pizzas and pastas and divine platters. For R99 we had: parma ham, mozzarella slices, chilli poppers (jalapeno chillis filled with cream cheese), salami slices, mushrooms, baby tomatoes, olives, roasted green and red peppers, coppa ham, grated cheddar cheese – all arranged on lettuce leaves. With a nice mozzarella and garlic focaccia. In Cape Town they call it pita bread. After sunset, the chill of the “lake” made me thankful for my windbreaker.

Hein went to meetings on Wednesday and I decided to walk from Bantry Bay to Camps Bay. It took me 35 min (3.8km) and I had a little rest at Café del Mar, gazing at the sea, sipping a cappuccino. When I got back to the guesthouse, my feet were aching but the exercise felt good, although I walked quite slowly for the next 2 days... We had dinner on the balcony - Chicken and Prawn Green Curry from Wang Thai, Green Point.



Thursday I armed myself with a travel novel “It’s all Greek to me” and joined Hein for the day. We had a few meetings, lunch at a Mugg & Bean in the Sanlam Building and met up with old friends at Quay Four, Waterfront.



After our expensive fish lunch the other day, we decided to give Cape Town another chance – Hein ordered oysters – my goodness! They were so tiny – the size of smoked oysters! And the mussel starter is not recommendable. Another disappointing experience! For good fish – dine in Johannesburg!

When we checked out on Friday, I wanted Souvlaki for lunch. My novel has had me salivating for days now... and I spotted a little restaurant, Aris Souvlaki in Sea Point. The Swarma and Souvlaki wraps were outstanding... And so was the Ouzo!



Well, I had to try, didn't I? I had a full whisky glass on my own – half before my food – half after! Well, I talked all the way from Sea Point to Parow – non-stop. Hein and his business partner kept grinning to themselves.

We stayed at my parents in Paarl for the weekend and had a big “snoek” and “baked sweet potatoes in the skin” for dinner.

On Saturday we drove to FranschHoek for lunch at Reuben’s – as I mentioned in my newsletter. We haven’t been to FranschHoek in ages and you will be amazed at all the restaurants that have popped up there – quite a lot of them on paved courtyards. I was really impressed with Reuben’s prices – being in a tourist attraction town and all.

In the afternoon, we drove through to Somerset West, met up with an old and very dear friend of ours, Pieter, and had a few beers in a pub.

We then went for a braai at Vannie (Wilhelm) and Ellenore and their adoring 3 children – Inge, Quintin and Mia. Emily was born a few days ago. All natural births at home. I really admire Ellenore for that.

We had rolled, deboned and seasoned chicken (Spar) and heaps of Greek salad (their children just adore salad) and jacket potatoes. And the men finished off quite a few bottles of red wine and solved the country’s problems.

Sunday, 2pm, we flew back home. A successful business trip and awesome food experiences!