

The 5 Best Local Dishes Enjoyed by Capetonians



Fish and chips is a classic Capetonian dish | © Roo Lewis / Getty Images



Nancy Amon 07 May 2020

Capetonians love their food, and some of their favourite dishes have been around for quite some time. If you're visiting Cape Town – also known as the Mother City – be sure not to miss these tried and tested locally loved feasts.

The Gatsby

The Gatsby is a feast of a sandwich | © Eric Nathan / Alamy



One of the most popular foods in the Cape Flats is the Gatsby – a gourmet meal fit for the ravenous. There are several variations of the dish, but the most popular is the ‘full house’. A fresh baguette is sliced open and layered with hand-cut fried chips and topped with tender slices of steak, lettuce, tomatoes, fried egg, cheese, masala and a sauce of your choice. Best of all, you can customise yours to your preferred taste.

You can find a Gatsby menu at local takeaways like [The Golden Dish](#) or [Aneesa's](#). Prices vary depending on where you go, but this very popular local dish is generally very affordable.

Fish and chips

Fish and chips is a great meal for the budget-conscious | © Roo Lewis / Getty Images



Cape Town’s residents love seafood, especially freshly line-caught fish, fried to perfection and served with chips. Add a sprinkle of salt and a splash of vinegar to give it that authentic taste that’s been passed from generation to generation. The origin of fish and chips in [Cape Town](#) is still unknown. While some say that the British introduced the dish, others believe that it’s always been around. Either way, catching fish was a good means to put food on the table, as it was simple and could easily be sold to make an income. It was and still is one of the city’s most affordable meals.

One of the best places to sample Cape Town's fish and chips is the ever-popular Snoekies, a take-away café that's been around since 1951. Founder Hans Mickleit and his wife started off serving fish and chips to local fishermen from an old converted bus. After experimenting with smoked fish, Hans noticed the demand for it and went on to open a factory in 1956. Today, Snoekies has branches in Hout Bay, Sea Point and Tokai.

Another popular fish and chips shop is Ooskus Fisheries, set in the heart of Gordon's Bay Village. The family-run seafood spot has been serving a range of dishes – like calamari steak, hake and catch of the day – since 1985. You can enjoy your meal on the small terrace or purchase fresh seafood to cook at home.

Prices for a meal vary depending on the portion size. Small parcels (enough to feed two people) cost as little as R55 (£2.35), while larger parcels can cost anything from R100 (£4.25) and up. Choose from a wide range of fish, including hake, stock and snoek, choose your size of chips and, if you're really hungry, add a bread roll or two.

Braai vleis (barbecued meat)

Braai is not just a meal – it's a social gathering | © Esther Naude / EyeEm



Another popular local dish is barbecued meat that's often served on a braai – South Africa's version of a BBQ. While the food preparations are similar to a BBQ, it's the cooking that differentiates the two. Foods like steak, chicken, lamb and sausage are cooked on an open gas grill, and the fire remains lit during the social gathering.

Braai is the go-to social event in South Africa, and the meat that is cooked this way is usually eaten at open-air events and festivals. In 2007, the country's National Heritage Day – which is celebrated on 24 September – officially became Braai Day. On this day, South Africans celebrate their culture and diversity by having a BBQ.

A braai is a South African barbecue | © Stuart Forster / Alamy



Restaurants and steakhouses across Cape Town serve a version of this flame-grilled dish, but Capetonians prefer their braai as a steak or chops, ribs, chicken, boerewors (sausage) and sosaties (kebabs).

Buy your favourite cut of meat from a local butcher and barbecue yourself, or buy it already cooked at a local deli. If you prefer to experience Cape Town's favourite braai in a restaurant, Spur or Cattle Baron are highly recommended for their high-quality food and value-for-money meals. Spur opened its first restaurant in 1967 and is known for its family-friendly atmosphere. Today, the chain has over 513 locations across the country. Cattle Baron, on the other hand, has been around for 32 years and are known for serving fine cuts of meat across its 20 locations. If you don't fancy anything on the wine list, Cattle Baron lets you bring your favourite bottle.

Biltong

Biltong is dry and cured meat | © Ann and Steve Toon / Alamy



South Africans may have taken a cue from the Khoisan and Bantu peoples – the native hunter-gatherers of the Sub-Saharan and Southern African regions – when they introduced biltong in their daily diet. The dry, cured meat originated from Southern African countries and is traditionally marinated in vinegar and spices before it's hung and air-dried. The word biltong has a Dutch origin and means buttock (*bil*) and tongue (*tong*).

Biltong can be found in most Cape Town shops | © CarlaMc / Getty Images

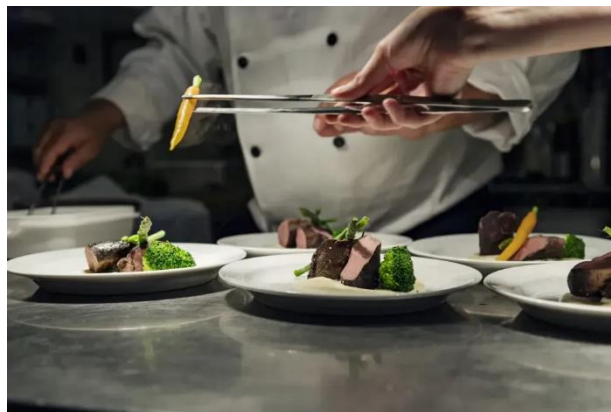


Available in nearly every shop, biltong comes in many different shapes and varieties, like droëwors (dried sausage), cabanossi, snap sticks and beef slices, but you can also have it lean (without the fat).

Some of the best biltong in Cape Town can be found at J&M, SA Biltong Master, Boesmanland Biltong and Famous Kalahari Biltong. The majority of grocery stores serve their own range of biltong or the mass-produced variety. Expect a wide range of prices, as it is often sold per kilogram. If you're only used to eating beef jerky, then you have to try some biltong in Cape Town.

Game meats (venison)

Venison goes well with a good South African red wine | © Clark and Company / Getty Images



Game meat can be found in many restaurants in South Africa – elk, kudu, gemsbok and springbok – with venison being the most popular. And since you are in Cape Town, be sure to pair your venison with some of the excellent local red wine. Due to its popularity, venison is often more expensive in Cape Town than elsewhere, and is often reserved for special occasions.

