

Post



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Hospital, then the wine country - August 12, 2025

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SUMMARY

First stop is the famous Truth Coffee where we indulge in great coffee and huge "toasties" (breakfast sandwiches about 5-inches tall). Across the street we visit Rapt with truly exquisite chocolates. Then on to Groote-Schuur Hospital and their heart museum which commemorates the first heart transplant and was quite fascinating. Next stop, the Company Gardens for some beautiful nature (also being enjoyed by a large number of very young children in the cute school uniforms). Back to our B&B to catch our ride out to Franschhoek, one of South Africa's top wine-producing regions. It's super picturesque - white Dutch Colonial

buildings with black thatch roofs set in a valley surrounded on 3 sides by mountains. Our lodging is a cute cottage. It has a pool and nice covered outdoor seating/eating area but it's too cold for us to enjoy those (the cottage was also very cold!) We walked around for a bit then dined at The Lamu Collection oddly located in a clothing boutique. To bed, very happy that heating pads were installed on top of the mattress! - Karen

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DETAIL

Today we say goodbye to Cape Town and hello to Franschoek in the wine country, but that's not til this afternoon. There is someone taking our room tonight (good for our host) but it means we need to pack and store our luggage while we do "whatever" this morning. A desire to have breakfast at "Truth Coffee" means we skip our normal morning meal here. Luggage stowed, we hike through the beautiful, but cool, day, down to seek Truth (Coffee), recommended by friends and online.

The place is pretty crazy and we're seated right away. Our waiter, Louis, asks how we're doing and we return the favor. He says he's not doing well. He was kidnapped last night by a troupe of mimes. They did unspeakable things, according to Louis. Groan.

The coffee menu is a big eight page newspaper-like thing. So many coffees, from different places, prepared in different ways. We both order and the coffee is gorgeous and truly delicious. Very smooth and flavorful, no bitterness. One could get used to that. We order breakfast which is equally over the top and delicious.

Louis sees a picture I'm looking at on my phone and asks if we had dinner last night at Black Sheep. Why yes, how did you know? He recognized the table and dishes from my picture. He waited tables there for a dozen years. He recognized a picture I showed him of our Austin friends with a house here.

Satiated and caffeinated we go across the street to Rapt, a chocolate shop. They, too, have amazing food things. Works of art. Karen buys some pieces for later. Next thing we know we're going to the hospital. Well, it's not all that dramatic, it was planned and an Uber is taking us.

Cape Town is famous for being where the world's first successful heart transplant was done, by local Christiaan Barnard. The city, country, and hospital were so proud they preserved the operating theaters (plural) where it happened (one to remove the donated heart and one for the receiving patient). There's a room after room showing the bedroom of the girl, killed in a car crash, whose parents donated her heart. There's a room showing how they practiced on dogs, and the recovery room, and Dr. Barnard's office, etc. etc. We watch a long video explaining everything, including how much of a womanizer the good doctor was. In all, it was very fascinating.

Another Uber whisks us to the Company Gardens. We're sure there's a good story behind the name but we don't know it. We walk around and see the vegetable gardens, the fountains, the oh-so-many huge trees, the albino squirrel, and on and on. It's really wonderful and there are lots of people enjoying it.

Close to the time of our pickup we hike back to our hotel. Chris (who drove us here from the airport just a couple of days ago) is driving us the hour and a bit up to Franschhoek. We chat along the way and arrange for him to take us back to the airport a few days hence for our flight back to the States.

Our instructions weren't all that clear. It's a bit off the intersection of a couple of streets. Thankfully our host was waiting for us and poked her head out. Hanli is her name and she's a proper Afrikaans lady from back when the white minority insisted on ruling over the black/colored majority. She gave us a remote control fob with lots of keys and shows us which is for the gate and which turns the alarm off and on, etc.

There's so much security: on the perimeter and in the spaces leading up to the house. Each door is two locked doors, one after the next. There's the alarm. Each window has a metal louvered part inside which is also lockable (and locked). So much security makes me nervous.

Settled, we walk through town and buy wine, cheese, and crackers. We stroll to the end of town and turn around and walk back. We marvel at the very fancy guest houses with their long "Notification of Indemnification" signs explaining how they're not responsible for anything. If you step onto the property and get hurt (whether through gross negligence of the owner or not) too bad. We later hear that insurance for such things is so expensive it's much cheaper to not have insurance and simply post one of these signs.

It becomes clear that this place was founded long ago by French Huguenots (or maybe the Dutch and then the French). Pretty much every business around here has an obviously French name, or serves French food, or sells French nicknacks. Our kind of place.

For dinner we have a reservation. I find the place on the map and we hike the 20 minutes over there. It's no where near there. It's back, just around the corner from where we're staying. Strange. It's a clothing store that happens to also have a small restaurant upstairs. We eat outside, overlooking the town and the gorgeous mountains all around.

One of the highly recommended things we order is the 'mix it yourself' guacamole. It's a mortar and pestle with all the makings of guac ready to go. Simply stir the pestle a few times and dive in with some chips. Pretty good. And (we've come to learn over and over) here they are not afraid of spicy heat on their food. They don't warn you. They don't think it's out of the ordinary. But it's hot. God bless them!

Photos



Wonderfully cool but sunny and blue skies. We'll take it. We're ready to do a bit more walking in Cape Town.



First stop: The famous Truth Coffee. A must visit. We're here for coffee and breakfast.



Louis, our crazy waiter. He also most likely also waited on our friends from Austin who have a house here.



A swan and a heart. Such good coffee. Not big cups but delicious flavor. These guys are the real deal.



The Sword of Damacese? No, just an order of Flap Jacks. The young lady to ordered them looks transfixed.



Full from breakfast we stroll across the street to Rapt chocolate shop. Works of art that you can eat. Karen bought some for later. Spoiler alert: they were delicious.



A mannequin of the first human heart recipient at The Heart of Cape Town museum. My dad was in the medical electronics business back then so we had to check it out.



The entrance to the Company Park. We're not sure which company but we're glad they made this beautiful park.



Winter's almost over and there are signs of spring all around. This part of the gardens includes the vegetable gardens with so many vegetables already in the ground, growing.



Cecil John Rhodes, a big presence here in Cape Town and in Africa generally. Founded Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He did so much and yet only lived to 49. That wave looks strangely familiar.



An old park/garden and so the trees are beautifully large specimens. Very well maintained.



We think maybe we're seeing signs of segregation everywhere, even in the local squirrel population.



Finally are up in Franschhoek. This is our pool. It's winter. We won't be getting in.



Our living room. Now the fireplace? We'll definitely be using that. It's chilly inside.



Dinning room and kitchen. This place is too big for just the two of us, but we'll enjoy it, nonetheless.

FARNSNIENTE

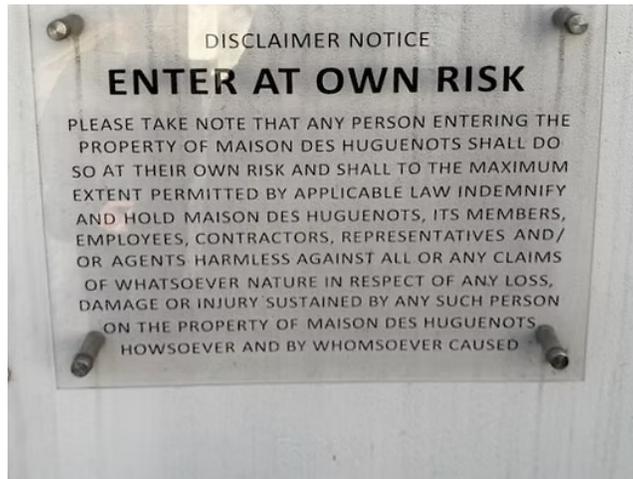


We couldn't get over the beautiful mountains all around. A national park? A landmark? No, just mountains.



Lots of cute places in Franschhoek.





Insurance? We don't need no stinkin' insurance. We'll just put up a detailed "Notification of indemnification" and we'll be off the hook!



Good view from our dinner table. Some sort of church across the street.



Dinner includes "mix-it-yourself guacamole". Really quite good. Interesting idea.

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