

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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And like that... it's over - August 15, 2025

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SUMMARY

We had to be out of the cottage at 10:00 so we spent the morning packing for our trip back to the States. We stored our bags at the BnB office and made our way to Motherdough Bakery for coffee and breakfast breads then poked through the shops on Main Street. After a final al fresco lunch at French Connection Bistro, we met up with our ride to the Cape Town airport. After a not-insignificant delay while it was determined that an ill passenger should be (and was) removed from the flight, we were on our way to London Heathrow to connect with our flight back to Austin. I gotta say, it was one amazing trip! - Karen

DETAIL

Today we fly back home. Well, not so much today as tonight, our flight is in the early evening, so we have almost one last full day to explore Franschhoek. And not really home, so much as "on our way home". We're going to London first (just to change planes) but we have a long layover at Heathrow, so we won't be home today.

Step one, of course, is repacking and ensuring the house is in shape to give back to the owners. We would love to just leave our bags here, but there's another group moving in today so our host will drive us, and our luggage, over to "the office" for the day.

We walk to a recommended bakery for breakfast. Walking is good as we'll soon be doing a lot of sitting (at the airport, on the airplane). It's still winter here, and it's overcast and cool. But the signs of spring are everywhere. A few flowers are already out but we can tell that in the coming days and weeks the place will be riot with lots of different blooms. Protea (we're still not sure how to say it) is the national flower and we see a lot of it, just not yet in bloom.

At Motherdough bakery we inspect all the sugary, starchy stuff on offer. It all looks good. They have big cooked dough balls with sugar sprinkled on top. There are different ones with different names. I can't decide what to get. Another customer points to one and says something like "that one has a whole tart inside, it's great". I'm sold and get one. In truth it's just custard inside, but it is good, nonetheless. The coffee is good, too. This is a country that loves its coffee and does it well.

Full, we set out again. On our way in we noticed a (very big) antique store across the street, so we go check it out. They have the biggest and most eclectic collection of stuff. It's all high end and priced accordingly. We talk to the owner for a long while who tells us about people who come in every year from around the world, to add to their collection. A highlight is the 100s of cork screws on the wall, each with a number that corresponds to an entry in her catalog. That, in turn, tells you the provenance (and expensive price) of that cork screw. The place is fascinating and we linger for a long time, inspecting pretty much everything.

Heading back into downtown proper, we walk as much as we can to try to work off a few of the calories from breakfast. At the grocery store (Clicks) we again inspect everything. The merchandise gives away that this is a high-end town and this place sells high-end foods, both packaged, raw, and prepared. We agree that if we lived here, this would be where we shopped. On the way out we see more Protea in flower arrangements for sale.

More walking around, we're trying to take in as much as we can. We're going to be gone and will only have our memories (and 3,800 pictures). We see a wall with 10 rows of electric fence guarding the place. Absolutely not uncommon in this part of the world. Most people have it and it's well maintained. We saw where one wire was a tad too close to a metal light post and you could hear a "click-click-click" (and see an accompanying spark) assuring you that touching the wires would be memorable.

We duck into more alley ways and stores than we have all trip, checking out all the businesses. This is a tourist town and a fun one at that. For lunch we go to the French Connection. We review the menu and pay close attention to the food being delivered to the next table. We get wine and relax.

On the sidewalk a group of guys we've see a number of times, stroll up. They're all (pretty much) in identical plaid shirts. They start singing and one of them has a big coffee can for collecting tips. If you know Ladysmith Black Mambazo, it's that kind of music. (In 1986 they appeared on Paul Simon's Graceland album performing the song "Homeless" which is wonderful.) Karen tips them 100 Rand (about US\$6). We're about to leave the country so we won't be needing our cash soon.

More aimless strolling after lunch and eventually we head back to the office. We've arranged for Chris to pick us up at 3pm for our 45 minute ride to the airport. As 3pm comes and goes we reach out to Chris who says he's running late. Soon Chris messages us that "Timmy" will be driving us instead. He'll be in a BMW X3. Not bad. It makes us no never mind who drives us to the airport. We have fun chatting with Timothy (as he likes to be called) and keep an eye on the clock, as we got picked up 30 minutes later than planned. Waiting for road construction slows us down, as does some bottlenecks en route. We still think we'll be fine, time-wise. As we get closer to the airport I reconfirm (as I had earlier with Chris) that we can pay by credit card. Timmy looks around and says "No, sorry, Chris has 'the machine'". Karen looks at me. Had we not tipped the singers the 100 Rand we'd be just fine, but we did.

Upon being dropped off at the airport we pay what we can and tell Timothy to "WhatsApp" us his address and we'll mail the rest. What can he do, he agrees. [We did get crisp, clean bills and mailed him the balance as soon as we got home].

On the plane in Cape Town we keep our face masks on just until everyone pretty much onboard and settled. As we wait to push back from the gate, I notice a 20 something woman across the aisle who doesn't appear well. She has a barf bag and is using it. She's slumped forward, in obvious discomfort. We put our face masks back on. Over the next hour or so the flight crew, and then medical personnel attend to her. I'm madly Googling the symptoms of ebola.

Eventually she's taken off the flight. The crew goes over every bag in the overhead and identifies the owner of each, to ensure she didn't leave anything onboard. They clear out the row and spray disinfectant on everything. Her blanket and pillow of put into a big yellow bag labeled "INCINERATE!". We're all a bit rattled. It turns out the young lady sitting across the aisle from me, next to puke-girl, had been in Business Class. They ran out of room and had to bump her back here to Premium Economy. She's not having a good flight.

Crisis over, we push back from the gate and the rest of our trip to Heathrow is uneventful. We sip our cocktails and wine with dinner and reflect on what a wonderful trip this has been. We loved Botswana and South Africa and the people. It's a beautiful place and is a real price performer. Will we be back? No time soon, but... we still need to visit Madagascar, the Seychelles, and Mauritius. When we do, I'm sure we'll spend time in Cape Town. And maybe another safari or two? Time will tell.

[the end]

Photos



Walking around, under the grey skies, we enjoy what flowers are already in bloom, and see lots of buds (including the Protea, the national flower) almost ready to pop.



At Mother Dough, we confirm what we've read online, which is that the place is great. Too much sugar, but when in Rome...



At the antique shop next door they had

FARNSNIENTE





Many interesting things at the upscale Clicks grocery store, including flower arrangements featuring, of course, protea.



We were reminded that many feel they need to protect their homes with 10 rows of electrified wire. It's almost more the rule than the exception (especially in Cape Town).



We felt comfortable exploring alleyways leading back to more stores and restaurants for the many tourists who come here every year.



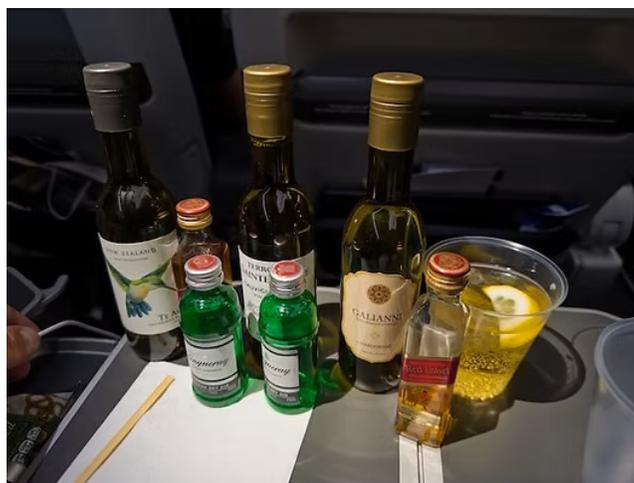
Another awesome meal (and price performer)? No surprise. This is the veggie burger and sweet potato fries at French Connection.



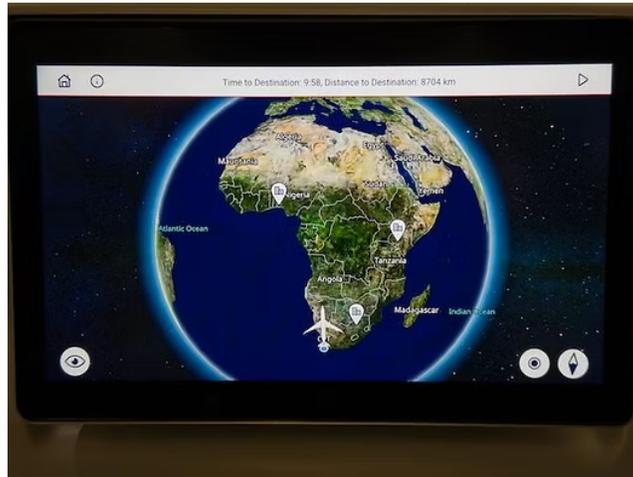
As we ate we were serenaded by a group of singers who reminded me of Ladysmith Black Mambaso, a favorite.



Hurling down the freeway I got a glimpse of Cape Town's Table Mountain, off in the distance. It definitely is a recognizable landmark.



On the plane, the flight attendants want to sleep and no better way than to ensure we're passed out, too. This is 'pre-dinner cocktails' and 'wine with dinner' for the two of us.



While awake (not a long time) I could follow our progress flying back to London. Other than a short stretch over the Mediterranean (and English Channel) we were over land the entire way. This is in contrast to our flight earlier this year, from Sydney to Los Angeles, which was 100% over water.

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