

**Introduction**

The Western Cape is a vast area, well endowed with a plethora of excellent climbing areas. The Cape Peninsula alone could keep you busy for a lifetime. Only 3 hours from Cape Town lies the indescribably beautiful and magical Cederberg Mountains, a range of mountains that is home to some of the finest trad climbing in the world. The best areas are Krakadouw, Tafelberg and Wolfberg, which boast routes from single to 10 pitches long in a wild and remote setting.

Closer to Cape Town and surrounding the Boland are many alpine peaks with a great variety of climbing from short climbs to 15 to 20 pitch routes to semi big-wall adventures. Most of these routes require good knowledge of the mountains and the routes. The best areas are Yellowwood, Du Toit's Peak, Witteberg, Castle Rocks and Klein Winterhoek. Towerkop, about 4 hours from Cape Town is a truly magical peak high in the Swartberg mountains. It is wild and isolated with excellent short (3 to 5 pitches) trad routes. More information is available under the respective areas.

**Grading**

Grading has always been a very subjective beast and the cause of many long and heated discussions around the campfire. The higher up the scale of difficulty one climbs, the more subjective the grade becomes. On the harder routes criteria such as height, strength, fitness and personal motivation can all play a vital role in how hard one finds the move or the route.

Some routes are renowned sandbags, while others are soft for the grade. Whatever the case, grading is merely a guide to what you can expect from a route. For many people who are venturing up to The Ledge for the first time, it is a good idea not to be too ambitious, as the steepness and exposure can be intimidating. Knock a grade or two off your plans and you will find that you will get more done and have a much more enjoyable time.

S.A.	France	U.S.A.	U.K.	UIAA	S.A.	France	U.S.A.	U.K.	UIAA
10	3+	5.4	Diff	III	24	7a	5.11c	E4/5	VII+
11	4-	5.6	Mild S	III+	25	7a+	5.11d/12a	E5	VIII-
12	4	5.6	Severe	IV	26	7b	5.12a/b	E5/6	VIII
13	4	5.7	Hard S	IV+	27	7b+	5.12b/c	E5/6	VIII+
14	4+	5.8	Hard S	IV+	28	7c	5.12c/d	E6	IX-
15	5a	5.8	VS	V	29	7c+	5.13a	E6/7	IX
16	5b	5.9	VS	V	30	8a	5.13b	E7	IX+
17	5c	5.9	HVS	V+	31	8a+	5.13c/d	E7	X-
18	6a	5.10a	HVS	VI-	32	8b	5.14a	E8	X
19	6a+	5.10b	E1	VI	33	8b+	5.14a/b	E8	X
20	6b	5.10c	E2	VI+	34	8c	5.14b	E9	X+
21	6b+	5.10d	E2/3	VII-	35	8c+	5.14c	E10	XI-
22	6c	5.11a	E3	VII	36	9a	5.14d	E10/11	XI
23	6c+	5.11b	E4	VII+					

**Banking and currency**

The currency of South Africa is the Rand (ZAR), and it is rather volatile, depending on current government corruption or national strike actions, etc. At the moment it is sitting at around R13 to US\$1, R14 to €1 and R20 to GB£1. So . . . quite good for Americans and Euros to visit.

Credit cards are widely accepted everywhere, even in the smaller towns, but it is advisable to carry some cash for the smaller shops and cafes in outlying villages.

Banks are open Monday to Friday 9 am to 3.30 pm (no lunchtime closing) and on Saturday mornings from 9 am to 11.30 am. There are also numerous Bureau de Change kiosks in the city that are open outside these hours and in the V&A Waterfront shopping mall there are a few that are open till late and on Sundays. Auto cash machines are situated everywhere.

## General costs

Cape Town is definitely not the cheapest city in South Africa. It draws the most tourists of any area in the country and due to this, prices are slightly inflated. Having said that, Europeans and Americans will still find it way cheaper here than in their home country.

A sumptuous meal for two at an average restaurant, with a bottle of wine, will set you back about R450 and a local beer in a pub will cost around R15. In the liquor store a case (24) of local beer is about R220, a decent bottle of wine about R65 to R85 (with cheaper wine going down to R35) and a bottle of decent whisk(e)y (Jameson or Famous Grouse) will cost you between R180 and R250.

## Medical care and hospitals

Medical care in South Africa is of the very best, and Cape Town has some of the best hospitals and doctors in the world. However, these are generally private hospitals and if you do find yourself in need of hospital care, you would need some sort of medical insurance to be able to utilise these. There are general (state) hospitals where treatment is charged at a very nominal amount, but these are not quite as good and efficient as the private ones. Most towns and villages have their own hospital or clinic as well as well-stocked pharmacies.

## Emergencies and rescues

The Western Cape is covered by Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR). If you are involved in any accident at the crags, call 021 937 0300.

The primary objective is, at all costs, to try to avoid emergency situations, particularly ones that could necessitate a search and rescue operation. However, accidents do happen and often when least expected. Here are some pointers to follow if something unfortunate does occur:

1. Remain calm and, if possible, ensure that the climber is safe and under no further threat.
2. Treat for shock and keep on reassuring the patient.
3. Apply the necessary first aid.
4. Ensure that the patient is comfortable and warm.
5. Decide on a plan of action.
6. Phone Search and Rescue (021 937 0300) if there is cellphone reception.
7. Never move the patient unless you are absolutely sure that there are no spinal or neck injuries.
8. Do not attempt to evacuate the patient over treacherous or steep terrain.
9. Never leave the patient alone unless this is an absolute last resort, and if you must, then secure the patient and mark the area well. If there is no cellphone reception send one of your group (with a cellphone) to alert the rescue services and it is prudent for them to have the following information:
  - *Name and age of patient*
  - *Nature of injuries*
  - *Nature and seriousness of situation*
  - *Nature of the terrain*
  - *The location of the patient*
  - *Weather conditions*

## Emergency procedures

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### Numbers to call in an emergency

Program these 24-hour numbers into your cellphone (preceded by AA to keep them at the top of your contacts).

1. AA Search and Rescue 021 937 0300 for medical assistance and rescue services. This is the direct number to Metro Control for Wilderness Search And Rescue (WSAR) and MCSA Search and Rescue.
2. AA Mountain Security 086 110 6417 to call for help and/or report all crime-related incidents.
3. AA Ambulance 10177 only to specifically request an ambulance (do not rely on this number for rescue, although they are meant to re-direct your call to WSAR).

Note: In addition to calling the Mountain Rescue number, it is advisable to directly call any rescue personnel member that you may know personally, so keep a cell number or two handy. It is also often possible to get an SMS through where no call is possible. Remember to send your SMS to yourself as well, to verify that it was transmitted.

ICE (In Case of Emergency) numbers are what emergency personnel will look for on your cellphone, should you not be able to speak. Enter ICE1, ICE2, etc. into your cellphone, each with the name and number of a next of kin or personal contact.

#### Disclaimer

Rock climbing and mountaineering is a very dangerous activity, where you can get seriously injured or killed.

Mountains, by default, can be dangerous places and no guidebook or topo, no matter how flawlessly written, can remove the risks undertaken when venturing into mountainous terrain. Climbers should take responsibility for their own safety and for members of their party. Climbing is a high-risk sport and can cause severe injury or death. Blueline topos and its authors can in no way be held responsible or liable for death or injury resulting from the use of our topos, or the information contained on [www.bluelinetopos.co.za](http://www.bluelinetopos.co.za)

Blueline topos have been written and constructed so that climbers can share the superb trad climbing the Western Cape has to offer. Although every caution has been taken to ensure the topos are as accurate as possible, there will undoubtedly be errors. Please be mindful of this and use the written description in conjunction with the topo and your mountain savvy to decide the path of the climb. Users of these topos must rely on their own discretion and judgement before utilising any of the information therein. By downloading, purchasing or using any Blueline topo or utilising any information on [www.bluelinetopos.co.za](http://www.bluelinetopos.co.za), you automatically assume full responsibility for your own actions and life.

Blueline topos are essentially guides and in no way should it encourage people with little or no experience to attempt climbs that are out of their depth. Blueline topos are in no way instructional and inexperienced climbers are strongly advised to seek the guidance of experienced climbers, or hire a guide, before attempting any rock climb.

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