



**cradle of human culture**

discover yourself

[cradleofhumanculture.co.za](http://cradleofhumanculture.co.za)

#cradleofhumanculture





© Magic Mill, Dean Saville & Karlind Govender

Journey back in time to trace the origins and development of human culture over the past 100 000 years, and uncover the mysteries of what it means to be human.

From ornately decorated ostrich eggs and seashell beads to carefully crafted bone tools and beautifully executed rock art, you will discover humanity's earliest use of symbolism, art and technology - and find your own roots in the process.

The story of humans began millions of years ago at the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site in Gauteng in the north of South Africa, but the narrative continues along the coastlines, including the Western Cape. Here, our earliest ancestors started to harness their spirituality, use fire and tools, and illustrate abstract thought. Here, too, they learnt to adapt their behaviour and diet to their environment.

Three important archaeological sites reveal how our ancestors started to innovate socially, behaviourally and culturally. Follow in their footsteps and discover how we became what we are today.

The Cradle of Human Culture encircles a vast area - Diepkloof Rock Shelter on the Cape West Coast; Blombos Cave near Stilbaai; and Pinnacle Point near Mossel Bay - your trip to the Cradle of Human Culture does not start or end with these three sites.

Choose a journey, and start your road trip.





©Zeitz MOCAA



**cradle of human culture**  
the artist's journey

## Cape Town

Cape Town's story begins with the birth of Table Mountain 800-million years ago and the discovery of human footprints dating back 117 000 years. Today it's a colourful and harmonious fusion of ethnic diversity and a city overflowing with opportunity. Hike up to Peers Cave, for art at its finest visit Zeitz MOCAA and Norval Foundation, for local artists Maboneng Township Arts Experience will leave you inspired, at the Iziko South African Museum visitors can expect view collections ranging from fossils to historical tools. Among the many displays is a multimedia compilation of artefacts and objects offering a deep insight into the lives our early human ancestors, Homo sapiens. See the results of some of the archaeological research conducted along the southern Cape's coastline over the past 25 years, including replicas of the archaeological artefacts discovered at Blombos Cave near Stilbaai.

## !Khwa ttu, Yzerfontein

Join San demonstrating their skills and sharing their ancient knowledge about oral history, tracking animals and identifying plants at !Khwa ttu, a non-profit San culture and education centre.

In celebrating past and present San culture and helping to restore and protect their culture, !Khwa ttu combines culture and heritage,

adventure, relaxation and education, in keeping with the centre's slogan, San Spirit Shared. Expect sweeping views, nature trails, guided tours and home-cooked food as part of your introduction to the world of Southern Africa's San people.

[www.khwattu.org](http://www.khwattu.org)

## West Coast Fossil Park, Langebaan

Plan your route to the West Coast Fossil Park near Langebaan to see many well-preserved fossil remains of some of the animals that roamed the area about 5-million years ago. The recently redeveloped park offers informative guided walks to the attraction's dig site, where you can see fossils in the ground as they were buried and uncovered by researchers. There is also an interesting interactive museum, providing further insight into the fossil discoveries and their significance.

[www.fossilpark.org.za](http://www.fossilpark.org.za)

## Elands Bay Cave, Elands Bay

Ancient San paintings have been found in the Elands Bay Cave in the mountains a few kilometres from Elands Bay. Researchers believe people lived in the cave. The site was occupied and hunting and gathering activities continued until the 17th century. The discovery of hearths inside the cave has shown that the early people who lived there used fire. It also appears that they stored food underground and used ostrich eggs as vessels for water.

Rock paintings include large images of eland, regarded by the San as a spiritual creature, as well as smaller antelope and other animals. Most striking is the many small handprints on the cave walls, believed to be those of children and young teenagers.



## Diepkloof Rock Shelter, Piketberg

Though not open to the public, Diepkloof Rock Shelter near Piketberg is perhaps the most significant destination on The Artist's Journey route. Here, researchers have discovered evidence of human occupation for nearly 85 000 years, and what is believed to be some of the earliest use of symbolism by early humans.

In addition to Middle Stone Age tools and other artefacts, scientists from the University of Cape Town's Department of Archeology and French colleagues have found about 300 pieces of ostrich eggshell with patterned markings thought to be around 65 000 years old in the shelter's deposit.

The researchers believe the graphic designs had meaning, indicating a form of communication ("symbolic messaging") that set our Diepkloof ancestors apart from their predecessors.

In addition to the Middle and Later Stone Age deposit, the site also displays rock art dating back to San hunter gathers, Khoe pastoralists and the colonial period. The overlapping sequence of these rock paintings also shows the long period during which the cave was occupied and used.

## Riel dancing and living culture

Experience an authentic riel dance, a cultural expression of courtship rituals, animal antics and joyous jive moves practiced by descendants of San and Khoi people. The dance form has in recent years enjoyed an exciting revival among young and old. The most famous riel dance group is Die Nuwe Graskoue Trappers from the small Cedeberg settlement of Wupperthal. The troupe has enjoyed immense success on the international cultural stage, including winning several gold medals at the World Championships of Performing Arts in Los Angeles in 2015.

## Sevilla Rock Art Trail, Clanwilliam

See some of the finest examples of San rock art in the region at nine sites along the Sevilla Rock Art Trail on Traveller's Rest Farm, 34km from Clanwilliam. n the R364 regional route over the spectacular Pakhuis Pass. Follow the 5km trail along the Brandewyn River for a fascinating glimpse into the lives of the original inhabitants of the area, who lived here for thousands of years.

This spiritual cultural journey is enhanced by the natural surroundings, indigenous fauna and rich birdlife along the Sevilla Rock Art Trail, as well as wildlife in the area, such as springbok, eland, dassies (rock hyrax) and other small animals. Buy a permit to enter the site at the Traveller's Rest farm stall.

[www.travellersrest.co.za](http://www.travellersrest.co.za)

## Truitjieskraal, Matjiesrivier Reserve

The Cederberg is dotted with rock art, but Truitjieskraal in the Matjiesrivier Reserve World Heritage Site is arguably one of the most impressive sites, with rock paintings dating back thousands of years. The Truitjieskraal interpretive trail, with information boards providing insight into what exactly you're seeing, takes you on a journey of discovery of the ancient San and Khoekhoe cultures.

Find out more about the lives of people who lived in the area thousands of years ago, how the landscape formed and changed, and how plants and animals fit in. You will need to obtain a permit from Algeria campsite office or nearby Dwarsrivier farm, home to Cederberg Cellars.

Take a side trip to the Cederberg Wilderness Area (you need another permit to enter) to see the beautifully executed 1 000-year-old ochre rock paintings of people and a group of elephants, before continuing to the reserve's Stadsaal (Afrikaans for "City Hall") Cave.



Die Nuwe Graskoue Trappers at bushmans kloof



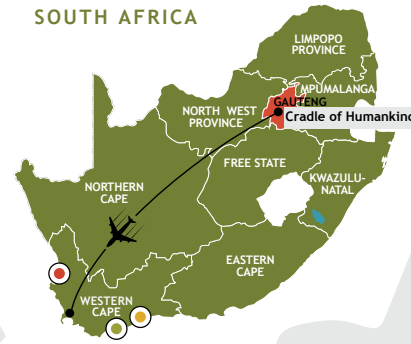
# Cradle of Human Culture

SOUTH AFRICA

Routes:

● The Artist's Journey

● The Coastal Journey



CAPE KAROO

GARDEN ROUTE & KLEIN KAROO

CAPE WINELANDS

CAPE OVERBERG

INDIAN OCEAN

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Diepkloof  
Rock Shelter

CAPE  
WEST  
COAST

Elandsbaai  
Elands Bay Cave

Wild Flowers  
Riel Dancers

Clanwilliam  
Sevilla Rock  
Art Tour

Truitjieskraal  
Stadsaal  
Caves

Vredenburg

Langebaan  
West Coast  
National Park

Yzerfontein  
!Kha ttu

Table Bay

Robben  
Island

Cape Town

Table Mountain

False Bay

Cape Point

Walker Bay  
Foraging at  
Klipgat Cave

Gansbaai  
L'Agulhas

Waenhuiskrans  
Cave

Arniston/  
Waenhuiskrans

Stilbaai  
Stilbaai Tidal  
Fish Traps

Mossel Bay  
St Blaize Cave

Knysna

Plettenberg Bay

Nelson Bay Cave

Cango Caves  
Oudtshoorn

George  
Dine with locals

Franschoek & Stellenbosch  
monuments

Franschoek

Dine with  
locals

Kayamandi

Stellenbosch

Matjiesfontein

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## cradle of human culture the coastal journey

### Cape Town

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### Dylan Lewis Sculpture Garden, Stellenbosch

The seven-hectare Dylan Lewis Sculpture Garden in Paradyskloof, Stellenbosch, is set among lush indigenous vegetation. The project was born in 2009 when its creator, the artist Dylan Lewis, started shaping the contours of the garden.

Since then, he has placed more than 60 sculptures in this beautiful setting - ranging from human and shamanic figures to large abstract works and his iconic big cats. A theme integral to his work includes "the untamed wilderness within the human psyche", which he expresses through his sculptures and their positioning on the landscape.

Visit this serene place by appointment to admire the art, be one with nature and experience a sense of spirituality and transience conveyed by this minimalist space. To arrange a visit, email [reservations@dylanart.co.za](mailto:reservations@dylanart.co.za) or call +27 (0)21 880 0054.

### Dine with a local, Stellenbosch

The Stellenbosch 360 tourism initiative's Kayamandi Township Tour and Dine With a Local experience offers visitors to Stellenbosch the chance to dine with locals from different backgrounds and learn about their daily lives, stories, hopes and aspirations. Dip into traditional African or Cape Malay cuisine while enjoying local wines from one of the many local estates surrounding the university town.

### Phillipskop Mountain Reserve, Stanford

The 246ha Phillipskop Mountain Reserve lies on the southerly slopes of the Klein River Mountains 10km east of Stanford. This is where you will find Phillipskop Cave, a local rock heritage site.

It is set among the reserve's outcrops made up of hard quartzitic rock, also known as Table Mountain sandstone.

This is one of the few sites with rock art paintings in the Overberg region, displaying rare yellow handprints attributed to Khoe herders.

Enjoy a day exploring the reserve's tranquil hiking trails, taking in some impressive rock stacks and a waterfall, before climbing up to the cave to see the ancient rock art and imagine the scene thousands of years ago when our ancestors sheltered here from the rain or sun and immortalised their thoughts and way of life on the cave wall.

Access to the reserve is via a 3km dirt road, which is best accessible by vehicles with a higher ground clearance.

[www.phillipskop.co.za](http://www.phillipskop.co.za)

### Klipgat Cave, De Kelders

Access the two chambers of Klipgat Cave, located a stone's throw from the seaside village of De Kelders near Gansbaai, via the Walker Bay Nature Reserve, to discover not only the dramatic ocean views through its "windows" and "portal", but also a visible link to our human ancestors.



Here, archaeologists have uncovered stone artifacts, preserved bone tools and Middle Stone Age human remains dating back between 65 000 and 85 000 years. Evidence of early sheep bones in the caves also show that pastoralists from the Later Stone Age lived in the area about 2 000 years ago. Detailed explanations at the site will lead you through the lives of our ancestors from the Middle Stone Age through the Later Stone Age.

[www.xplorio.com/gansbaai/](http://www.xplorio.com/gansbaai/)

## Waenhuiskrans Cave

Continue your exploration at the picturesque seaside town of Waenhuiskrans, also known as Arniston, about 25km from Bredasdorp. Here, discover - though only at low tide! - the massive limestone Waenhuiskrans Cave, falling within the Waenhuiskrans Nature Reserve.

The effort to get there, walking along the beach and scampering up some rocks, is worth it for the incredible views, even though there have been no major archaeological finds in the cave.

## Tidal fish traps, Stilbaai

At Stilbaai, more than 20 ancient stonewalled fish traps represents the technological evolution of early fishing practices in the area. The traps have been declared a National Heritage Site and they are now falling within a Marine Protected Area. They illustrate a common fishing method along the Southern Cape coast that endured through the ages.

## Blombos Cave, Stilbaai

At Blombos Cave, researchers have found unquestionable proof of *Homo sapiens* - or “modern human beings”. The excavations at the world-famous archaeological Blombos Cave site, overlooking the sea, have yielded many important riches.

Other findings include a piece of ochre engraved with a pattern and believed to be 75 000 years old, which was the first known ochre engraving found in the archaeological records. Archaeologists at the site also uncovered what has been called “the oldest artist’s toolkit” a 100,000-Year-Old Ochre-Processing Workshop. Archaeologists discovered two abalone shell containing an ochre-rich mixture which may have been used for decoration or skin protection.

Researchers have found that successive colonies of hunter gatherers lived in the small cave, hunting, fishing and gathering seafood; that they painted their bodies; and that they created abstract symbols. The first known drawing was found here as well, a silcrete flake with a hatched cross pattern drawn on it with ochre.

## Pinnacle Point, Mossel Bay

Step back in time and imagine the lifestyle of the Middle Stone Age people who lived at Pinnacle Point, a Provincial Heritage Site south of Mossel Bay on the Garden Route, between 170 000 and 40 000 years ago. An international team of researchers have found some of the earliest evidence for modern human behaviour at this picturesque spot. Excavations in the various caves at Pinnacle Point have showed that early man exploited shellfish resources as part of their diet, applied heat to rock to make stone tools; and made ochre pigment. These discoveries, and many more, have contradicted scientists’ earlier beliefs that modern human behaviour only emerged around 40 000 years ago.

Plan and book a Point of Human Origins Experience tour - only by appointment - to gain profound insight not only into the discoveries at the site, but to reflect on where we came from, consider who we are now - and where we are heading as the human race.

[www.humanorigin.co.za](http://www.humanorigin.co.za)

## Cape St Blaize Cave, Mossel Bay

The cave at Cape St Blaiz, below the lighthouse, is the site of some of South Africa’s first archaeological excavations. More recently, parts of the cave were explored by scientists as part of the major Mossel Bay Archaeology Project. Containing deposits dating back to the Middle Stone Age, the cave has - like those at Pinnacle Point and Blombos - yielded evidence for ancient exploitation of marine resources such as shellfish; some of the earliest evidence of using pigments and symbolism; and proof that early humans used heat to make stone tools.

Pause your road trip here to see the cave for yourself, and pause to consider this: genetic research has shown that all people alive today stem from a core population of about 600 humans who lived about 165 000 years ago. The evidence suggest that these early ancestors lived here, in the Mossel Bay area, in the Western Cape’s Cradle of Human Culture.

## Dine with locals, George

Book a two-hour Dine with a Local experience through the George Tourism office to share a home-cooked meal with locals and enjoy music, poetry or dancing together. Share our common humanity as it has been shaped for tens of thousands of years as you feast on anything from traditional African dishes to Cape Malay food, depending on your hosts, at the same time supporting this newly launched local development project.

[www.georgetourism.org.za](http://www.georgetourism.org.za)

## Cango Caves, Oudtshoorn

Recent archeological finds have shown that humans lived and sheltered in the Cango Caves for at least 80 000 years. A beautiful exhibition on the first floor of the interpretation centre explains how humans evolved from the origin of times to today. It describes the significance

of the archaeological sites in the area and illustrates some of the powerful rock art found nearby. It was originally thought that the caves extended for only about a kilometre, but new evidence shows that they extend for well over 5km.

[www.cango-caves.co.za](http://www.cango-caves.co.za)

## Nelson Bay Cave, Plettenberg Bay

Make your way to the scenic coastal holiday town of Plettenberg Bay to track some more fascinating Stone Age cave discoveries at Nelson Bay in the spectacular Robberg Nature Reserve, jutting 1.8km out into the sea. Scientists have found that humans occupied this area - declared a World Heritage Site as part of the Cape Floral Region - as far back as 125 000 years ago.

Nelson Bay cave was first excavated in the 1960s, and the results showed that the diet of the early humans who lived here comprised food ranging from birds, eggs and plants to shellfish, as well as seals and bush pigs, with the remains dating back to about 5 000 years, resulting in large middens.

Artefacts ranging from Stone Age tools to 2 000-year-old pottery, graves containing human remains in a foetal position and decorated with shells and ochre, and many more cultural riches have been found in the cave.

Access the site from inside the nature reserve, about 8km from the town - and set aside enough time to explore the cave and its beautiful surrounds.

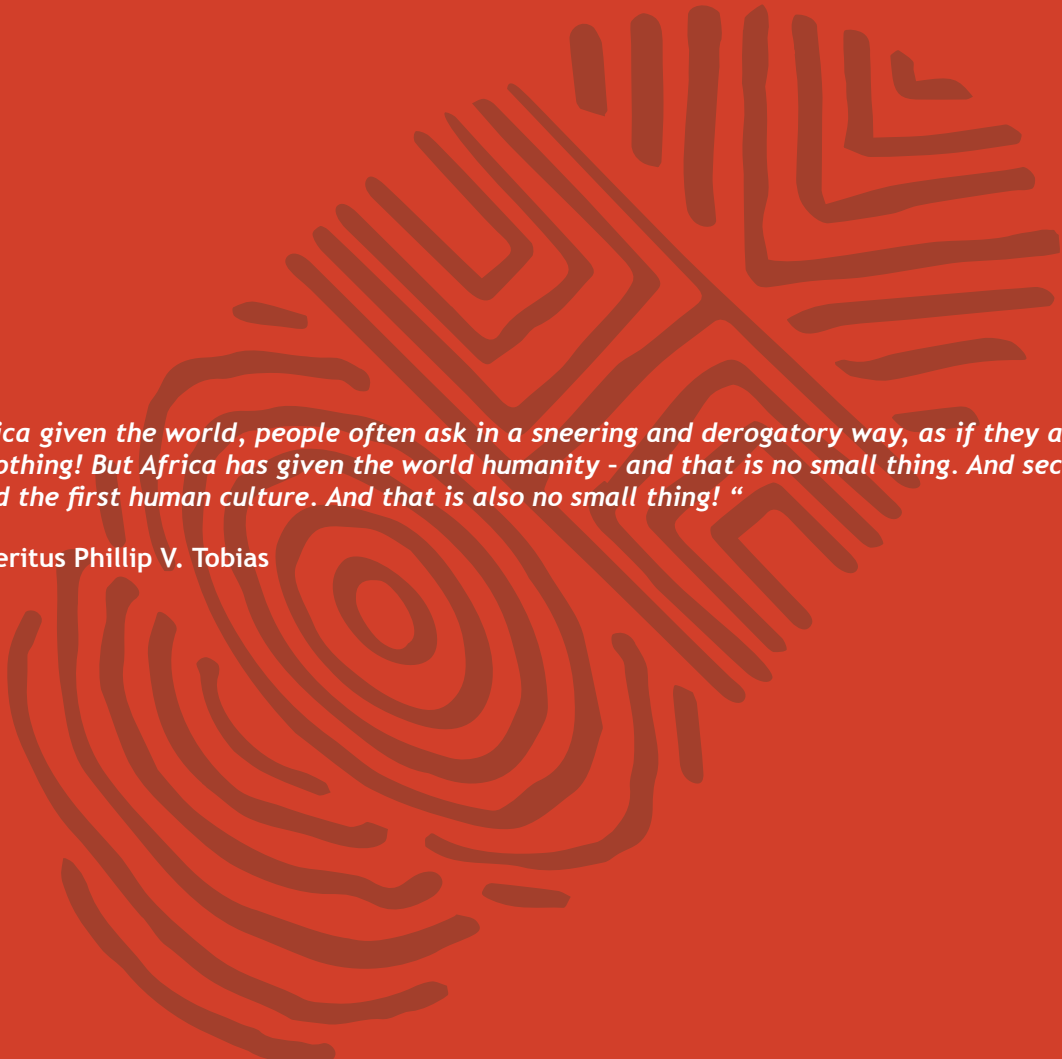
[www.plett-tourism.co.za](http://www.plett-tourism.co.za)

**For more information:**

[www.cradleofhumanculture.co.za](http://www.cradleofhumanculture.co.za)

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*“What has Africa given the world, people often ask in a sneering and derogatory way, as if they already know the answer - nothing! But Africa has given the world humanity - and that is no small thing. And secondly, it has given the world the first human culture. And that is also no small thing! “*

- Professor Emeritus Phillip V. Tobias







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& WESTERN CAPE**  
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