

THOMAS NIEDERSTE-WERBECK
PHOTOS HENRIQUE WILDING

CAPE TOWN

A TASTE
OF

CALLWEY





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IMPRINT

FOREWORD

BY THOMAS NIEDERSTE-WERBECK

The “tablecloth” is Capetonians’ name for the cloud formation that often blankets Table Mountain. As legend has it, a 17th-century a Dutch sailor named Jan van Hunks had a smoking contest on the mountain with the devil himself. Whoever smoked the longest was the winner. Van Hunks won, but the smoke from their pipes has veiled the mountain ever since—a permanent tablecloth.

Welcome to Cape Town! The only global city that has it all, all at once: ocean, mountains, vineyards, desert, and skyline, all within just 30 minutes' drive. The combination is utterly unique anywhere in the world, and is definitely part of Cape Town’s magic. After my first visit here in January 2016, I returned every year. Now I actually live here, slightly outside the city, and already feel almost like a local. Capetonians don’t boast about living in the most beautiful city in the world. They simply ask: “Did you see the sunset this evening?”—and smile knowingly when the answer is a nod. Oh, the light! Go see the sunset from Signal Hill, with Table Mountain glowing pink and the bay below gleaming silver, and you’ll understand why people from all over the world move here and never leave.

But there’s something even more elusive:

an energy, a defiant zest for life that this city has maintained despite, or perhaps even because of, its huge social contradictions. Cape Town is not a comfortable city. It challenges, it surprises, and sometimes it is brutally honest about what it reveals. But that’s exactly what makes it so vibrant and alive. At the southern tip of Africa, where the Atlantic wildly embraces the Cape, a scene has developed in recent years that attracts foodies and chefs from all over the world—a cuisine that is as diverse, vibrant, and unique as the city itself. Cape Town is cooking. And the world is coming to its table.

The unique culinary status of this South African metropolis is down to its history and its boldness in transforming that history into something new. Cape cuisine is a distillation of centuries of cultural encounters. Indigenous tradition meets Malay spices, Dutch home cooking rubs shoulders with British influences, Boer country food embraces the flavors of the Indian subcontinent. The result is known as Cape Malay cuisine, one of the most unique and complex cooking traditions in the world, found nowhere else in this form. Spiced bobotie bakes, velvety bredie stews, handmade koesisters: In a surprisingly short time, the city has become one

of the world’s most avant-garde food destinations, with chefs including Margot Janse, Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen, and Feast founder Luke Dale-Roberts showing that South African haute cuisine can easily rival that of Paris, Tokyo, or New York. The Test Kitchen restaurant was ranked among the world’s top fifty restaurants for years. No coincidence, but the result of a generation of chefs who are deeply aware of their roots and unafraid of experimenting.

This book is an invitation—an invitation to explore the Cape Town that locals know and visitors love. Through its markets, its restaurants, its wineries, and its people. A culinary portrait of a city it is impossible to describe without getting hungry.

Welcome to the Cape!

Your table awaits.





GARDENS



HISTORY MEETS MODERN LIFE



The Centre for the Book on Queen Victoria Street. Now a protected monument, the building is part of the National Library of South Africa

In order to understand Cape Town, it's essential to explore Gardens—my personal favorite neighborhood. Nestled between Oranjezicht and Tamboerskloof at the foot of Table Mountain, this district brings together colonial history, cultural richness, and all the creative dynamism of a modern cosmopolitan city. Gardens is the green heart of Cape Town, and The Company's Garden is at its center. Long overlooked in the shadow of Table Mountain, this park is now blossoming with new life. A stroll through the streets here will reveal trendy restaurants, cool shops, and a distinctive energy that is unique to the area. Its name encapsulates the history of Cape Town from its very beginnings. The Gardens is named after the gardens of the Dutch East India Company, whose legacy dates back to the first permanent settlements at the Cape. The very first garden was laid out near the Fresh River by Hendrik Boom in 1652, and quickly grew to cover around 45 acres. The famous Government Avenue—over half a mile long and also known as “The Gardens”—was initially planted with lemon trees, later with orange trees, and finally, during the time of Simon van der Stel, lined with oak trees, whose descendants still stand today. Over the centuries, the district underwent a fundamental transformation. Once a kitchen garden supplying passing ships, after 1679 it gradually became a botanical park under Commander Simon van der Stel.

The neighborhood that grew up around this green heart is now one of South Africa's culturally richest areas, home to national institutions including the Iziko South African National Gallery, the Iziko South African Museum—the country's oldest museum, founded in 1825—and the South African Jewish Museum, housed in South Africa's oldest synagogue. The darker chapters of history have also left their mark on Gardens. The neighborhood was designated an exclusively white residential zone during the apartheid regime; in the 1970s, new residential towers were built in response to a so-called “white housing crisis.” Since then, Gardens has left this past behind and has matured into a cosmopolitan, diverse neighborhood. What makes Gardens Cape Town's most popular neighborhood today is its unparalleled variety. Trendy Kloof Street, with its restaurants, cafés, and boutiques, is within walking distance, as is iconic Long Street. The streetscape is dominated by the legendary Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel—among Africa's most venerable and historic hotels—and the Labia Theatre, one of the city's oldest independent art-house cinemas. Gardens is more than a neighborhood: It is Cape Town's living memory.



The Delville Wood Memorial in the Company's Gardens in Cape Town. It was erected to commemorate the South African soldiers who fell in the Battle of Delville Wood during World War I

The sprawling Company's Garden is the green heart of Cape Town



Modern life is everywhere in Gardens



CAFE SOFI

A LOVE LETTER TO SOPHIA ELECTRA

CAFE SOFI BY TASHAS
2 PARK ROAD
8800 CAPE TOWN
www.cafesofi.com

OPENING HOURS:
 Monday to Friday 7 am to 10 pm
 Saturday 8 am to 10 pm
 Sunday 8 am to 9 pm

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Stepping into Café Sofi on Park Road instantly conjures the vibrant spirit of a woman who saw the world in brilliant colors. “We only need to open our hearts” is the inspiring philosophy that guides the café. A place where tradition, design, and good food come together in perfect harmony.

Café Sofi, founded by Natasha and Savva Sideris, is a personal project created as a tribute to their beloved mother, Sophia Electra. Sophia was a woman full of contradictions: a conservative soul in an eccentric shell, a romantic with an eclectic mind. Her recipes and her way of life reflected that complexity. She wove her Greek roots together with African dreams and boundless curiosity about the world.

“When we found this house, it had everything she loved. Old meets new!” says Savva. The café, housed in a Victorian building, uses the quirks of the space to the full and creates intimacy and character. The interior design, a perfect blend of traditional and modern, reflects Sophia’s elegance and eccentricity. The menu, created by Jill Okkers, is a nostalgic journey through Sophia’s favorite dishes. Grilled cheese with butter, pan-fried, with a cup of

soup. Roesti with beef ragout. Warm vanilla brioche with brown sugar. Croissant with whipped honey cream and mascarpone. So simple, so irresistible. This is no try-hard, show-off restaurant food. This is Sophia saying: Here! Eat! It’s good!

The desserts, such as “Pineapple Heaven” cake and warm tiramisu, are particularly convincing evidence that sweet things are not just for special occasions—they’re for life.

The quiet promise hanging over this café announces, “Everyone who knew her saw the world in more vivid colors.” It’s not hard to believe. Café Sofi is more than a place to eat; it’s a love letter to Sophia Electra, making every guest feel like they’re coming home. Every detail, from décor to menu, brings her unique personality to life. In these surroundings, eating becomes magical.



Left – So inviting! The historic façade of Cafe Sofi

Below – Park Road in Gardens, also a great place to shop

Bottom – Tradition meets modernity in this fresh, laid-back interior



BUTTERNUT SALAD

A SATISFYING SALAD WITH ROASTED PUMPKIN,
BARLEY, AND CREAMY FETA CHEESE

SERVES 4
DIFFICULTY



BARLEY PILAF
1 tbsp (15 g) white onion, finely diced
½ tsp (2 g) garlic, thinly sliced
¾ cup (125 g) pearl barley
5 tsp (25 ml) olive oil
½ tsp (2 g) fine salt

BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND TOMATOES
10 oz (300 g) butternut squash, cut into
½-inch slices
2¾ oz (80 g) cherry tomatoes, halved
(for roasting)

SALAD
2¾ oz (80 g) cherry tomatoes (fresh),
quartered
2 tbsp (20 g) red onion, thinly sliced and
roasted or raw
4¼ oz (120 g) baby gem lettuce, chopped
1 tsp (4 g) parsley, roughly chopped
1 tsp (4 g) chives, finely chopped
1 tsp (4 g) coriander, finely chopped
1½ oz (40 g) Greek feta, in pieces

DRESSING
2¾ tbsp (40 ml) olive oil
4 tsp (20 ml) lemon juice
About ¼ tsp (1 g) salt and pepper

TO SERVE
2½ tbsp (40 g) feta spread or crème fraîche
½ tsp (3 g) za’atar or your favorite nut mix

1 BARLEY PILAF
Sauté the white onion and garlic in olive oil over low heat until soft and tender. Mean-while, rinse the pearl barley under cold water to remove excess starch. Remove the pan from the heat and add the rinsed barley, salt, and 1¼ cups (300 ml) of water. Cover and return to the stove. Simmer on low heat until the barley is soft and the liquid is absorbed (about 30–40 minutes). Take the mixture out of the pan and spread it evenly on a plate to cool, fluffing it up with a fork.

2 BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND TOMATOES
Peel and halve the butternut squash and re-move the seeds. Cut into ½-inch (1.5-cm) slices. Heat a grill pan. Brush the squash with a little olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill for 3–4 minutes on each side until the squash is soft and has appetizing grill marks. Remove from the pan and set aside. In the same pan, dry-roast the halved cherry tomatoes until just soft. Set aside.

3 MIX THE SALAD
In a large mixing bowl, toss together the grilled pumpkin, barley pilaf, red onions, fresh and roasted cherry tomatoes, baby gem lettuce, parsley, chives, coriander, and feta. Dress the salad with lemon juice and olive oil, mixing well. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

4 SERVE
Spread the feta dip or crème fraîche over the bottom of a large bowl or platter. Spoon the dressed salad mix on top. Sprinkle with za’atar (or nut mix) and drizzle with a lit-tle olive oil.

TIP
The pearl barley can be boiled ahead of time and kept in the fridge. Za’atar gives the salad a nutty, spicy kick. Or use a mix of toasted pine nuts and sesame seeds instead. The feta dip is very easy to make yourself; just blend feta with a little olive oil and lemon juice until creamy.



CHICKEN POT PIE

GOLDEN PUFF PASTRY OVER CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM FILLING

SERVES 4
DIFFICULTY



PUFF PASTRY
1 small egg, beaten
5¼ oz (150 g) puff pastry, slightly larger than the pie dish, cut to fit
¼ tsp (approx. 1 g) Maldon salt
¼ tsp (approx. 1 g) ground black pepper

CHICKEN FILLING
10 oz (300 g) chicken breast, cut into pieces
½ tsp (3 g) vegetable bouillon powder
¼ tsp (approx. 1 g) Maldon salt
¼ tsp (approx. 1 g) ground black pepper
2¾ tbsp (40 ml) olive oil
4 oz (110 g) mushrooms, quartered
¾ oz (20 g) spring onions, sliced
½ tsp (2 g) chives, chopped
10 oz (300 g) fresh cream

1 PUFF PASTRY
Preheat the oven to 390°F fan-forced (200°C). Beat the egg in a bowl. Brush the puff pastry with the egg and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 10 minutes until puffed up and golden brown.

2 CREAMY CHICKEN FILLING
Cut the chicken breast into chunks and season with vegetable bouillon powder, salt, and pepper. Heat olive oil in a pan and add the mushrooms. Cook until soft, then remove and drain off any excess moisture. Add the chicken pieces to the same pan, adding a little more oil if needed. Cook through until the chicken is firm and golden brown. Stir in the cooked mushrooms, spring onions, and chives. Add the cream and simmer, stirring, until the sauce thickens.

Remove from the pan, place in a serving dish, and cover with the baked puff pastry.

GOOD TO KNOW
A deconstructed take on the classic pot pie. The golden puff pastry is baked separately and served on top of a rich chicken and mushroom filling, making the pie quick to prepare without compromising on flavor. Paired with a crisp green salad or just some simple steamed vegetables, this is a fancy everyday meal that leaves nothing to be desired.



FARRO

SIMPLY DELICIOUS. AND ONE OF MY FAVORITES!

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FARRO
30 WANDEL STREET
8000 CAPE TOWN
www.farrofoodandwine.com

OPENING HOURS:
 Wednesday to Saturday
 6:30 to 10 pm

There are some restaurants you walk into and just know they are the place for you. One such is Farro in Gardens. The tiny Victorian row house has 24 covers in a setting of Oregon pine floors, high ceilings, and arched doorways. This is no flashy designer place trying to be cool, but a house that breathes, lives, and welcomes you in. Start your evening at the little cocktail bar with a good cocktail, simple, carefully made, in a beautiful glass. It sets the mood and awakens a sense of intrigue. No random out-of-season blueberries plonked on your gin and tonic here! That alone says everything about Farro's philosophy. Then the menu! Alex Windebank creates a five-course menu every day, with a watchword that could hardly be bettered: "Just make it delicious." Classic French technique, modern European spirit. No gimmicks, no ego, no showing off. Simply pure flavor. Simply pure joy.

Alex and Eloise Windebank both met in London while working in restaurants there. Together, they've racked up over 30 years of experience in hospitality. They moved to South Africa, and opened Farro in Johannesburg in 2018. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a series of pop-ups,

then a delightful spell at the Gabriëlskloof wine estate in the Overberg. Now they're back in Cape Town, ready to write the next chapter. Their story overflows with love, persistence, and a profound belief that good food really can make the world a better place. The wines are local, mostly from small producers. It's obvious that real thought has been dedicated to creating the list—with the aim not of impressing, but of complementing the food. Farro is not a restaurant for status symbols. It's a place for people who know that the best things in life are often the simplest: good wine, great food, and someone you love across the table.



Left – As minimalist as the food.
 The dining room at Farro

Below – Beignets and mixed pickles as little snacks to accompany a cocktail

Bottom – Hosts Alex and Eloise Windebank love good food and modern art



BOUILLABAISSE SAUCE

SOUTH OF FRANCE STYLE

SERVES 4
DIFFICULTY



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
1¼ oz (50 g) white onion, sliced
3½ oz (100 g) fennel, sliced
3½ oz (100 g) leek, sliced
1 tsp (4 g) garlic, grated
1 strip of orange peel
About ½ tsp (2 g) saffron
1 bay leaf
5 tsp (25 g) tomato paste
⅓ cup plus 2 tsp (100 ml) Pernod
Generous 2 cups (500 ml) fish stock
About ½ tsp (2 g) salt and pepper

1

Heat the olive oil in a large pan and sauté the onion, fennel, and leek over medium heat with a pinch of salt until soft.

Add the garlic, orange peel, saffron, and bay leaf and cook for a few minutes.

Add the tomato paste and cook for a further 2–3 minutes.

Add the Pernod and simmer until the liquid has completely evaporated.

2

Add the fish stock, bring to a boil, then lower the heat. Season with salt and a touch of pepper.

Simmer for 30 minutes, then remove from the heat and take out the bay leaf.

Blend the sauce until smooth and check the seasoning again.

3

SERVE

The bouillabaisse sauce can be served as an elegant sauce for a piece of fish, or as a flavorful soup accompanied by bread.

TIP

The sauce can be made ahead of time and keeps in the fridge for 2–3 days.

For a deeper color, steep the saffron in a little warm water beforehand.

If you do not have Pernod to hand, use pastis or other anise liqueur instead.





BETWEEN TABLE MOUNTAIN AND THE OCEAN

Cape Town is a place you dream of—
and one you never forget.

Between Table Mountain and the ocean, spectacular nature, cultural diversity and an exceptionally vibrant food scene come together. This Callwey book opens a window onto a city that celebrates food in all its facets: from creative fine dining and iconic restaurants to lively markets and street food, extending into the wine regions of the Western Cape. Locals present Cape Town from their own perspective, sharing original recipes, stories and recommendations beyond the familiar paths—approachable, authentic and full of passion. The result is a book that is at once a cookbook, a travel experience and a place of longing: a sensory journey through one of the world's most fascinating culinary capitals, as multifaceted and inspiring as the city itself.

UNIQUE

**Cape Town's culinary diversity in all its
glory—from fine dining to street food**

**Exclusive original recipes and insider
knowledge straight from chefs,
winemakers, and hosts**

**The most comprehensive book of
culinary delights about the Cape**

CALLWEY