

Things to do in Tulbagh in the Cape Winelands

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Craggy mountains, knobbly old oak trees, curving Cape Dutch gables, endless rows of vineyards and orchards, and maybe a peaceful little farm dam. These are the things you'll be daydreaming about after a trip to Tulbagh. Just an easy 90-minute drive from Cape Town, this charming little town in the Cape Winelands is all about rich history and stunning views, with loads to explore.

Tulbagh is tucked away in a valley, surrounded by the Obiqua

range to the west, the Winterhoek peaks (snow-dusted in winter) to the north, and the Witzenberg mountains to the east. The town has been around since the early 1700s and is the fourth oldest in South Africa; only Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and Swellendam are older. If you're into old buildings and charming streets, you'll love Church Street, which is packed with more heritage buildings – from Cape Dutch to Edwardian and Victorian – than other street in the country.

But don't go thinking Tulbagh's stuck in the past. Whether you want to sip wine and craft beer, hike through nature, or chase an adrenaline rush, there's lots to do here. Or you can simply chill out and soak up the country vibe. Life moves slowly here, with wide-screen views, quiet moments, and a kind of beauty that seeps into your soul.

Quick tip: Pop into [Tulbagh Tourism](#)'s info centre at 38 Van der Stel Street to kick off your time in the area. Grab a map, get the lowdown on local attractions from the well-informed staff, and plan the rest of your adventure from there.

1. Visit the museums



Tulbagh's Earthquake Museum is a must on your visit to Tulbagh

Church Street in Tulbagh is a museum hotspot – there are four of them, all packed into this charming little stretch. Start at number 4, where you'll find the **Earthquake Museum**. For a small fee, you can get a ticket that covers entry to all four museums in Church Street. This one dives into the catastrophic 1969 quake that shook the town to its core. It measured 6.3 on the Richter scale and killed 12 people, most of them children. It also gives fascinating insight into how historic Church Street was later rebuilt and restored. There's a room that tells the stories of three settlements nearby that were completely wiped out after the quake, a haunting look at the homes that were demolished or their occupants moved.



The Oude Kerk became a museum in 1925

The **Oude Kerk** should be your second stop on the museum trail. It's one of the last surviving cruciform churches in South Africa and was built in 1743. The gable and ring-wall were added in 1795. When a new Dutch Reformed church was built in 1915, it fell into disuse but reopened as a museum in 1925. Admire the original pulpit, as well as some antique Cape Dutch furniture, not to mention an ornate symphonium which still plays music using changeable metal discs with punched patterns. There's a small graveyard outside; there are even graves under the floor inside the church.



The Victorian Period House Museum

At 14 Church Street is a **Victorian Period House** built in 1892 that depicts the rather starchy lifestyle of rural middle-class families at this time, with its dark colours and overstuffed chairs. The back rooms house a Christo Coetzee art exhibition, showing off this South African artist's varied styles over the years.



The kitchen at the Pioneer House Museum

The gabled building at 22 Church Street, built in 1803, was originally a postmaster's house and is now the **Pioneer House Museum**. It portrays the daily life of a typical working-class family from the early 1800s to the 1920s. There's a simple room with rietdak ceiling, a more formal voorkamer with wooden ceiling, a red-walled period kitchen with open hearth, and an eclectic collection of old kitchen implements, furniture and china.



If you only visit two museums in Tulbagh, choose this Oude Drostdy Museum (and the Earthquake Museum)

Rounding out the list of Tulbagh museums, the [Oude Drostdy](#) – originally the local courthouse – is about 3km outside town on the Winterhoek Road. Designed by Louis Michel Thibault in 1804, it suffered storm damage in 1822 and a devastating fire in 1934 before being damaged again during the 1969 earthquake. It was restored in 1974. Surrounded by mountains, today it's a stately building with yellowwood floors. It holds a collection of early Cape furniture and household items, including a throng of old gramophones. I especially loved the high ceilings, even in the kitchen which also has a massive fireplace. Book ahead to enjoy lunch or Fijn Tee (High Tea) in style. The Oude Drostdy is also an events and wedding venue.

2. Explore Church Street



This restored Cape Dutch building in Church Street now operates as a guest house

Take a stroll along Church Street to admire the lovely buildings that were brought back to life after the massive 1969 earthquake (you can read more about that at the Earthquake Museum – see point 1). Each building has a plaque out front telling you what it used to be, how badly it was hit, and how it was restored. Every building on this street is now a national monument – the biggest restoration project ever in South Africa. So, in a way, the earthquake turned this spot into a brilliant showcase of cultural heritage and a tourist favourite.

At the end of the street furthest away from the Oude Kerk (see point 1) stands a kitchen garden inspired by Babylonstoren in the Franschhoek Valley. It's laid out as a formal garden that grows fruit, veg and herbs to supply local restaurants and residents, while some products are donated to soup kitchens. Members of the local community are employed to tend the garden. It's open to visitors, so wander around to admire the layout and produce, or ask about placing an order to be collected before you leave Tulbagh.

Hot tip: Find the path behind Ballotina at 43 Church Street and walk to the lookout hut on Galgeheuwel (Gallow's Hill) for a view out over Church Street and Tulbagh and a chance to see some flowers in spring. You can get a better idea of the layout of the kitchen garden from up here too.

3. Visit Tulbagh wine farms for tasting

With around a dozen wine estates in this part of the Cape Winelands, you're spoilt for choice. The price for tastings varies fairly widely from R50 to about R150, but this is sometimes swept away if you buy a few bottles afterwards



Wine tasting at Saronsberg Cellar

[Saronsberg](#) has some impressive sculptures in the gardens. Enjoy your tasting outside overlooking a dam or inside in the gorgeous double-volume tasting room. Take your wine and wander the art gallery upstairs or sit in a ghost chair at the long tables downstairs. We had our most informed tasting of nine wines here. You'll find some French cultivars like viognier, rousanne, petit verdot and mourvedre, as well as the classic sauvignon blanc and shiraz. Using Tulbagh's famous earthquake as inspiration they've

named a white blend Earth in Motion and a red blend Seismic. You can order a charcuterie platter with your tasting.

At [Lemberg](#), you'll be greeted by rows of white roses if you visit in October/November. The modern tasting room offers a chance to savour wines named after the estate's bulldogs, like Lady, Spencer and Louis. Lemberg also produces wine from the Hungarian hárslevelű cultivar, so unusual and sought-after that there was none left for tasting when we visited.

[Krone](#) (Twee Jonge Gezellen) – home to the first underground cellar in Africa – is the place to go if you love your Méthode Cap Classique (MCC) wines. You get to taste a few of them, from sweeter Night Nectar types to rosé and brut, including the classic Krone Borealis Cuvée Brut made from chardonnay and pinot noir. If you choose to taste some of the older vintages, you'll find them more honeyed but shy on the bubbles, just the way I like them. Book ahead.



Grenache rosé and pinotage from Tulbagh's smallest producer, Manley Wine Estate

[Manley Wine Estate](#) is the smallest winery in Tulbagh, producing just 20 000 bottles a year. You'll find some French varietals like viognier and a pleasantly dry grenache rosé alongside the usual sauvignon blanc, pinotage, shiraz and cabernet. Do try the ultra-South African Ubuntu pinotage, which is a lighter-style pinotage that's perfect for summer days, has hand-drawn labels by local children, and helps support a local children's charity. We arrived on a quiet weekday and got a personal tasting from the charming owner, Markus Ehehalt, who was full of interesting information and amusing stories. The estate also has a restaurant and is a wedding/event venue.

[Theuniskraal](#) is a family-owned winery that will celebrate its centenary in 2028. The tasting room staff is knowledgeable and friendly, giving you insight into the farm's history as well as the wines it produces. They make both whites and reds, which you can try paired with a cheese or charcuterie platter if you like. Don't miss tasting these two out-of-the-ordinary wines: Cape Riesling – a cultivar not every estate still uses but is one of the first wines I remember drinking in my twenties; and Bouquet Blanc, made from gewürztraminer, with its floral flavours and spicy aroma, and a smidge of muscat. All the wines are delightfully affordable.

[Montpellier](#) wine estate is a must if only to appreciate its gorgeous little chapel in the vineyards (see the intro pic). For wine tasting, sit under a tree in the garden or follow the signs along peach-pip paths through the poplar forest to the Glass House with French doors on three sides. Choose a bubbly tasting or try a trio of their still wines. You can order a cheese platter or pizza to soak up some of the wine. In winter, tastings are in the cosy Bouval restaurant building with its giant fireplace.



Tasting with a view at Rijk's Wine Estate

[Rijk's Wine Estate](#) specialises in just two cultivars – chenin blanc and pinotage. You get to taste them in three ranges: Touch, Private Cellar and Reserve. The dazzling view of mountains and vineyards from the tasting terrace alone is worth the visit, but we enjoyed a relaxed and informative tasting too. My favourite of the six wines we tasted was the 2020 Reserve pinotage, rich, smooth and delicious. Too bad it's beyond our budget.

Other wine farms in the Tulbagh area include Blue Crane Vineyards, De Kleine Wijn, Oude Compagnies Post (home of Swanepoel Wines), Oudekloof, and Tulbagh Winery.

Pro tip: Once you decide which wineries you want to visit, always check on their website what their tasting days and hours are, or phone first, so that you don't make the trip only to find they're closed. Many are closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, for instance.

4. Join a Tulbagh Wine Walk



Walking through vineyards with mountain views on the Tulbagh Wine Walk

If you're game for a four-day (three- or four-night) walking adventure through the Tulbagh Valley, meet like-minded people on a [Tulbagh Wine Walk](#). Accompanied by a knowledgeable guide and with the peaks of three mountain ranges as a backdrop, you'll walk 8-13km a day. Enjoy wine tastings at Tulbagh wine farms, taste olives and olive oil, visit a museum, walk along

historic Church Street, and ride a tractor to the top of a mountain for a picnic with a view out over the Tulbagh Valley. The price includes accommodation, all meals, wine tastings, entry fees, and activities.

5. Wine by Bike

Vindoux Guest Farm lies very close to the wine estates of Saronsberg and Krone, and not too far away from Montpellier and Oakhurst Olives. Hire a bike at Vindoux for a [Wine by Bike](#) way to explore the area's estates and farm tracks. Choose half day or full day, and your fee includes helmets and water. Special wine carriers on the bikes help you transport your purchases. You can even venture further afield and explore Church Street (see point 2 above) by bike. You don't have to be staying at Vindoux but you do need to book ahead.

Bonus tip: We haven't tried it yet, but there's also [gin tasting](#) at Vindoux.

6. Enjoy a craft beer tasting



Taste craft beers at Buchanan's Brewery

If craft beer is more your speed than wine, try the craft beers at [Buchanan's Brewery](#). My Sweetie is a malty, medium-bodied Belgian-style beer with alcohol content of just 3% (the others are all 5%). Bit of an odd name for a beer? Well, owner Rod Buchanan originally called it Miss Molly after his labrador but faced copyright pushback so he changed it to the other name he used to call the dog.

Slow Boat is a German style Rauchbier with a smoked bacon flavour, the only one we didn't like but I assume it's an acquired taste. Bruno (named after another Labrador) is a medium-bodied Belgian-style pale ale, while the fruity, hoppy Amandla Ale is

South African through and through, no imported ingredients. Then there's Sons of Stout, a sweetish and creamy milk stout with chocolate and coffee tones. Or try Tulbagh Lager (my favourite) and Waveren Pilsener. The seasonal Winter Ale is what Rod calls a 'Christmas beer', with spicy tones of cinnamon, cloves and ginger.

You can try these brews at the tasting room behind [The Taste of Manley](#) from Wednesday to Sunday, but do phone first to check if the estate is open and not hosting a function.

7. Taste olives and olive oil



Taste olives and olive oils at Oakhurst Olives

[Oakhurst Olives](#) lies at the end of a cul de sac just outside Tulbagh. Here the granite and sandstone soils and summer sunshine make for happy olive trees. The crop is hand-harvested from March to June and you can enjoy a tutored tasting in the gorgeous double-volume tasting room.

You'll taste plump kalamata olives with no preservatives, colourants or other additives, and delicious olive marmelade – with or without chilli. Two cold-pressed extra virgin olive oils are included in your tasting – delicate and intense. For complexity, Oakhurst uses up to ten different varieties like leccino, frantoio and carotina in the oil blends. The delicate oil is very buttery but with a peppery bite in the back of the throat. The intense oil is stronger flavoured and also peppery on aftertaste.

8. Explore the art route



Part of the Christo Coetzee Art Exhibition

If you're a lover of fine art, you'll be happy to know there's a number of art galleries and artists in and around Tulbagh. Treat yourself to some visual stimulation by visiting the [Christo Coetzee](#) art exhibition inside the Victorian Period House at 14 Church Street (see point 1), or the Vasek Matousek Art Gallery, also in Church Street.

Saronsberg wine estate (see point 3) has a great collection of sculptures and paintings, and Rijk's Country House also has a contemporary art gallery. You can make an appointment to visit the area's artists in their studios, where they sculpt, paint, do

ceramics or printmaking. For more information, pop in at the helpful information centre at 38 Van Der Stel Street.

If you're up for a longer drive, the [Creative Hub](#) about 20km away near Wolseley is a place to see wonderful metal and sculpture sculptures, mosaics and other art forms. There's a café and deli too.

9. Go horse-riding

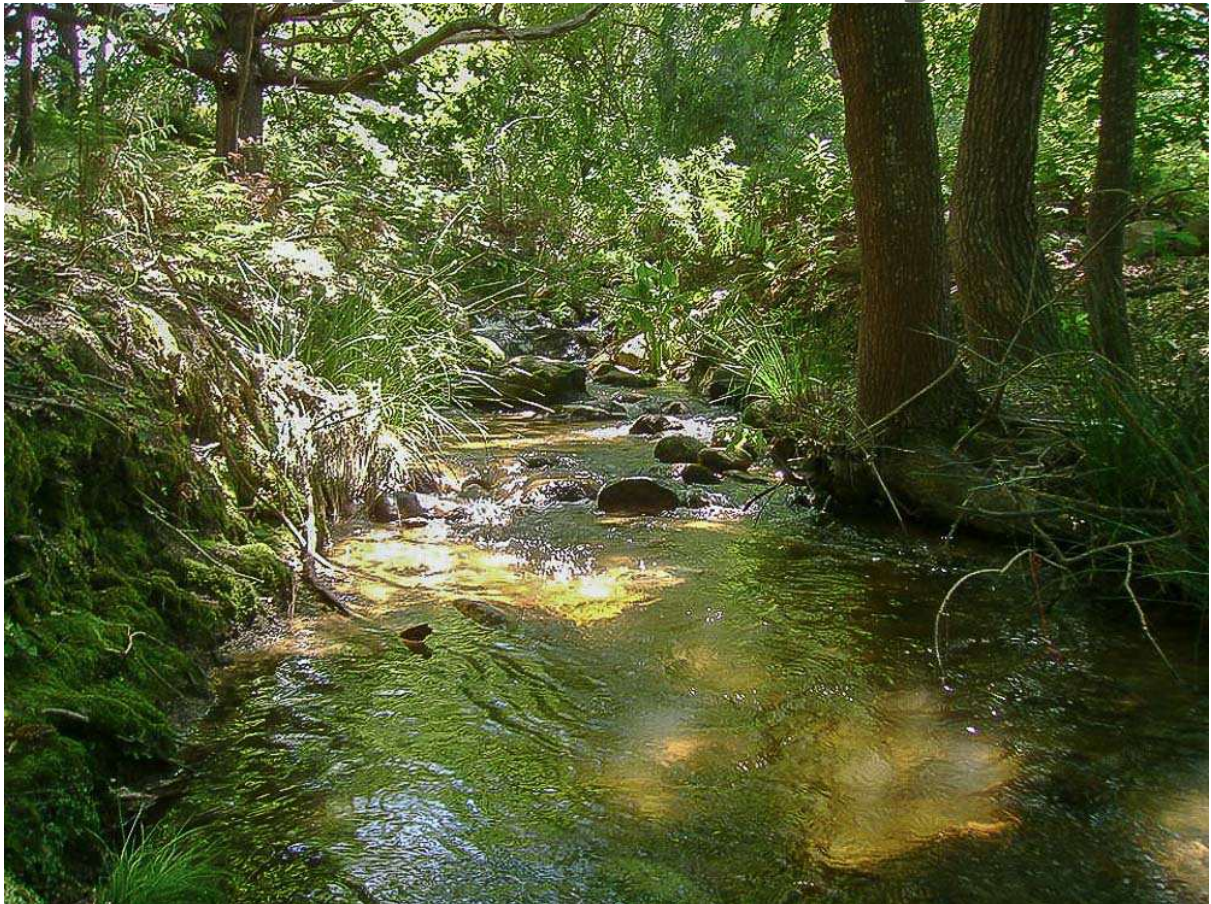


Go horse riding in Tulbagh (photo: Tulbagh Tourism)

Saddle up and go horse-riding in the foothills of the Winterhoek and Witzenberg mountains, through orchards and vineyards on the Vrolikheidlandgoed working farm. Enjoy peaches and plums from the trees in summer or the spectacle of blossoms in spring.

Soak up the fresh air and the views of mountains all around. Both novices and experienced riders are welcome, weight limit 85kg. Book ahead with [Tulbagh Horse Trails](#) and find the stables along the Winterhoek Road.

10. Go hiking and mountain biking



Go hiking along a river route at Murludi Trails (photo: Tulbagh Tourism)

Pull on your hiking boots and explore the mountains around Tulbagh to enjoy scenic views and mountain fynbos. A popular short walk is the Waterfall Trail (15-20 min) to a series of waterfalls and pools; just search for Waterval Nature Reserve on Google Maps. Or try one of the [Murludi Trails](#), with a 4km River Route and a 10km Elsbos Route. Murludi is also worth visiting in

high summer to see the hydrangea garden. The [Buchu Trail](#) at Oude Compagnies Post sees you hiking up a mountain for glorious views and pristine fynbos. Pay for your hiking permits via Snapscan.

If you'd prefer an overnight hike that takes you to a cave, gives views over Voelvlei dam and sees you sleeping in a converted double-decker bus, then consider the [Silwerfontein Hiking Trail](#). And for a multi-day hike that exposes you to some cultural spots and wine farms in Tulbagh, join The Tulbagh Wine Walk (see point 4).

If you're in Tulbagh on a Saturday, get up early and do the 5km [parkrun at Duikersdrift](#) at 8:00. Good for your health and some social interaction too.

Mountain bikers will be excited to know that the Cape Epic in 2021 and 2024 included the Tulbagh area so a lot of work went into the routes in the vicinity. See the [Tulbagh Mountain Bike Club](#)'s website for more info about some of these, ranging from 18km to 35km and taking in a number of wine farms in the area. You might even spot some zebra and springbok in the Welbedacht Nature Reserve. The MTB club maintains some 70km of track for you to enjoy alongside streams, vineyards, and orchards. If you've brought your bike, all you need to do is pay

for a day permit via Snapscan [here](#), then use the [Trailforks app](#) on your phone to get more specific info about the routes you want to ride.

11. Eat at Tulbagh restaurants

If you're like me, you'll definitely want to experience some Tulbagh restaurants while you're in the area. I've included a link to each of their websites below so you can check in advance what days they're open and what their hours are. Note that many restaurants in Tulbagh are closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Readers Restaurant



Find Readers Restaurant in an historic building in Church Street

The old building that houses [Readers Restaurant](#) in Church Street dates back to the late 1700s and used to be the sick comforter's

house (he read the bible to sick people – hence the name).

Readers has been going for around a quarter century. If you're a cat lover, you'll recognise owner and chef Carol Collins' obsession with them in the statues outside and the artworks in the bathroom nook.

We had tender asparagus with hollandaise as a starter then fall-off-the-bone slow-roasted springbok shank with a rich sauce and garlic mash as a lip-smacking main. Other menu choices include pork chops, steak and a burger. Although you may be tempted by malva pudding, don't miss the trio of homemade ice cream which is an experience rather than just a dessert. The night we visited, we had unusual and adventurous touches like balsamic vinegar (which tasted like honey), toasted sesame, and pickled ginger with a hint of wasabi – all yummy.

Kole en Deeg



Bacon and egg with a difference at Kole en Deeg

Don't miss brekkie at [Kole en Deeg](#) in Van der Stel Street. From the name (which means Coals and Dough) you might think you'll be eating roosterkoek with cheese or jam. Far from it. First, our flat whites were amazingly good, especially those made by owner Etienne Abrahams, although the other baristas didn't quite live up to his standard on return visits. And I loved my choice of poached eggs, feta and avocado on toasted roosterkoek, drizzled with basil pesto. It was so scrumptious it made me rethink my opinion that breakfast is the most boring meal of the day. My only quibble is the size of the meal; I was stuffed for the rest of the day!

Hubby loved his toasted roosterkoek with streaky bacon, creamy scrambled eggs and sautéed baby tomatoes topped with crispy caramelised onions. Presentation and flavours were top-notch. If we lived closer to Tulbagh, we'd be at Kole en Deeg once a week. When we complimented Etienne, it was no surprise to hear him talking about what a believer he is in quality, consistency and service.

PS They also do lunch, so think burgers, quiche, wraps and toasties. Open daily.

Olive Terrace Bistro



The Olive Terrace Bistro at the Tulbagh Boutique Heritage Hotel

[The Olive Terrace Bistro](#) at the Tulbagh Boutique Heritage Hotel on Van der Stel Street is a very popular venue so you might need to book ahead if you're visiting over a weekend. The prize seats are definitely on the pretty terrace, but you can sit inside if the weather doesn't co-operate. I had a yummy spring salad, with quinoa, roast butternut, asian slaw and hummus. My husband tried the Mexican chicken schnitzel, with spicy nacho crumb, guacamole, crème fraîche, tomato and jalapeño salsa. I loved that too, a nice twist on the same-old crumbed chicken. Green Thai curry, linefish, steaks and burgers also appeared on the seasonal menu. In winter, you might find dishes like oxtail, lamb tagine, or pork belly. Open daily.

Daphne's Bistro



There's a relaxed vibe at Daphne's Bistro at Duikersdrift

If fireplaces (two humongous ones) in winter or outdoor seating with fairy lights and mountain views in summer appeal to you, you'll enjoy a visit to [Daphne's Bistro](#) at Duikersdrift, about 5km outside Tulbagh. I loved the relaxed vibe, the red-and-white checked tablecloths, and the Italian menu. Think mainly wood-fired pizzas and pasta (about ten pasta sauces to choose from), as well as the odd steak or burger thrown in too.

My husband had a smash burger that was undercooked for the medium rare he'd requested, and his chips were a bit oily. He

hates making waves so wouldn't send the burger back for a little more cooking, which I'm sure they'd have been happy to do, but left the raw parts uneaten. I lucked out on my choice, loving my tagliatelle Amatriciana, the tomato-based sauce delicious without being too sharp, the garlic and pork cheek adding some depth. I'd definitely go back for the atmosphere and the pasta.

Chef & Co



Tables on the front stoep at Chef & Co

Chef Pieter Malan has lots of experience and an excellent reputation, so we couldn't wait to try [Chef & Co](#), a bakery, deli and restaurant, using the freshest seasonal ingredients available locally. Also, it has already rocketed to Tulbagh's top spot on Tripadvisor since it opened in March 2025. Tables line the stoep,

an attractive balcony overlooks Church Street at the back, and there are tables and a fireplace inside.

Looking back, we made some mistakes. We booked for an early supper on a Monday night and found that he wasn't there, although he did make an appearance a bit later. There was also some confusion with our first choice of a fish dish – the price hadn't been loaded onto the computer system yet. Since prices are on the high side, we didn't want to go into something blindly.

So we chose again, this time fillet with red wine and thyme jus. We had to pay for vegetables or chips separately. The fillet was tender and cooked perfectly to order but oversalted and the wine jus gelatinous. We were disappointed. In hindsight, we should have ordered the burgers which were on a two-for-one special that night; another couple who were also eating an early supper seemed to really enjoy them. Open daily.

Farm Deli and Foolish Things



Farm Deli and Foolish Things at Kloofzicht Country Estate

A place worth a stop in the country about 5km south-west of Tulbagh is the [Farm Deli and Foolish Things](#) at Kloofzicht Country Estate. At ground level are the deli and gift shop stuffed with interesting bric-a-brac. Go downstairs into the old wine cellar to discover the restaurant and coffee shop with their mismatched chairs and tables that all merge to form an artful whole. Sit in the cool inside, or outside under a tree where you can listen to the birds as you look out over the farm dam and small jetty. If country tranquillity is what you crave, this is the place for you. The blackboard menu of the day might include gourmet open sandwiches, salads, gourmet burgers, and a dessert and/or cake of the day. Open daily.

12. Enjoy a relaxing spa treatment

Stressed from working too hard? Sore muscles after your bike ride or hike? Book a spa treatment at [Vindoux Guest Farm & Spa](#) (closed Tuesdays, bookings essential) or [Trident Health Centre](#) at the Tulbagh Hotel. Try a de-stress back massage or a full body deep-tissue massage and leave floating on air, or treat yourself to a facial treatment or mani-pedi.

13. Ride a tractor up the Oudekloof Pass



Enjoy a tractor ride up Oudekloof Pass (photo: Tulbagh Tourism)

Go on a [scenic tractor ride](#) up the historic Oudekloof Pass to enjoy the mountains and views out over Tulbagh. The trip at Oudekloof Wine Estate takes about two hours and includes a picnic at the top. You'll learn a bit about the history of the area too, and imagine what it must have been like for the Voortrekkers and

their ox wagons when they came through here. Book ahead.

Further afield

14. Zipline the cobwebs away



The fun of the zipline slides at Ceres is just under 30km away from Tulbagh. Just 20 minutes away from Tulbagh along the R46 is Ceres, where you'll find [Ceres Zip Slide Adventures](#). Kit up with a special harness, helmet and gloves and get an adrenalin rush on eight slides from 100 to 290m long among the rock formations of the Schurweberg. Total distance is 1.4km. Great fun for the whole family (ages 3 and older) but small children will need to do

tandem slides. Book ahead and rent a Go-Pro on your helmet if you want a memento of your adventure.

15. See an Anglo Boer War blockhouse



An Anglo Boer War blockhouse on the R43 near Wolseley

On the R43 near Wolseley you can see a well-preserved Anglo Boer War blockhouse guarding the railway line and bridge over a river. Back in 1899-1902, the British Army depended for supplies and troops on the railway line from Cape Town to the Boer Republics in the north, so naturally the Boers started to attack railway lines and bridges. The Brits countered by building some 8000 blockhouses like this. There were water tanks on the ground floor, living quarters housing up to 20 men on the first floor, and a lookout post on the top floor. Not a single bridge protected by a blockhouse was blown up.

16. Visit Bosjes chapel and gardens



The gorgeous chapel at Bosjes Wine Estate between Wolseley and Ceres

Take a detour past [Bosjes Wine Estate](#) in the Breede Valley, between Wolseley and Ceres, to see a wedding chapel inspired by a bird in flight. As unusual as it is beautiful, it opened in March 2017. Take a walk around the indigenous gardens, with indigenous forest, Renosterveld, succulents, and water plants around the sculptural water fountain and stop for breakfast, lunch or just coffee and cake in the café nearby. For those looking for something less casual, there's also a fine dining restaurant on the property.

17. Drive Bain's Kloof Pass

If you're travelling from Cape Town/Paarl/Wellington to or from Tulbagh, don't miss driving over the historic Bain's Kloof Pass. Built by the masterful [Andrew Geddes Bain](#) from 1849-1853, this 18km engineering masterpiece on the R301 is now a national monument. As the official 'gateway to the north', Bain's Kloof Pass would have seen many ox wagons and horse-drawn carts back in the 19th century. Today, it's a snaking tarred pass through indigenous vegetation to a height of 594m, with the river running like a ribbon at the bottom of the deep kloof. The road is in good condition after being extensively renovated and reopened in 2022.



Tulbagh as seen from Galgeheuvel, or Gallow's Hill