

# Home brew



## CATCH A FEW Zs HERE

The Cederberg is known for its rooibos tea, rugged scenery, San rock art and the wildflowers that spring up every year. So put the kettle on and find out more about where to stay – as well as drink a cuppa – in the area.

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### OUDRIF

Situated 50km from Clanwilliam, Oudrif (see above) is an ecofriendly spot right on the Doring River and far from a plug socket. Everything runs off solar heating, gas or candlepower, and there's no cellphone signal. It takes a few moments to get over the techno horror – gasp, no Facebook! – but it's well worth it. The private guesthouses and boma were built using straw bales (good for keeping the heat in) and alien plants from the area. Owners Bill and Jeanine Mitchell serve three meals a day, Bill whipping up the salads while Jeanine braais outside. If you don't fancy reading all day or trying to beat Bill at poker dice, go for a walk or full-day hike, swim, try bass fishing – or go white-river rafting with the nearby rafting company.

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

## A (very) brief history of tea

1772



When naturalist Carl Thunberg trekked into the Cederberg to search for plants, he found the locals were brewing rooibos tea from what's now called the *Aspalathus linearis*, a shrub native to the area.

1904



When Russian pioneer Benjamin Ginsberg moved to Clanwilliam, he saw the potential in what was dubbed "mountain tea", so he started buying and reselling it. To create a more refined, better-quality version, he formed the popular Eleven O'Clock brand.

1930



Benjamin teamed up with a local farmer Olaf Bergh, doctor-slash-botanist Pieter Le Frans Nortier and two landowners (William Riordan and Oloff Bergh) to figure out a way to better cultivate the rooibos plants and increase production.

1940s



Henry Charles Ginsberg, Benjamin's son, started growing rooibos on a farm called Stillerus, followed by two others – Die Berge and Môreson – upping his production and earning himself the nickname the Rooibos King.

# OVER ROOIBOS TEA?

**Bushman's Cave Bergteater** is a natural open-air theatre 35km from Clanwilliam, where local artists perform against the rocky backdrop. Wander up the steps and you'll find a trail of orange-brown figures etched across a boulder – San art inscribed in the rock thousands of years ago.

**Ramskop Wildflower Garden** Aside from rooibos, the Cederberg is also known for its flowers. The annual wildflower show runs from the end of August into early September at the Blomkerk in Clanwilliam ([www.clanwilliamflowerfestival.co.za](http://www.clanwilliamflowerfestival.co.za)). If you're around in spring, stroll the paths among the various succulents and flora at the nearby Ramskop Wildflower Garden, which overlooks Clanwilliam Dam. The area is divided into sections representing the Knersvlakte, Richtersveld and Boesmanland. The tea garden is open during the flower season.

**The Old Goal Museum** can be found in the former jail – a building built in 1808 and now a National Heritage site. You'll unearth a collection of interesting items such as Voortrekker wagons, the old telephone exchange (used until 1995) and a visual history of rooibos tea.

**Sevilla Rock Art Trail** Thirty-four kilometres from Clanwilliam over the Pakhuis Pass is this 4km trail, with 10 San rock-art sites. You can park at Traveller's Rest (right next to the entrance), where you'll also need to pick up a permit.



## Tea for two



### THE YELLOW ALOE

Sit on the stoep overlooking an eclectic collection of windmills, hearts, flowers and wire sheep – or inside next to the fire – over a cuppa tea and something to eat. The coffee shop is open seven days a week and accommodation at this central Clanwilliam spot is available too. [www.yellowaloe.co.za](http://www.yellowaloe.co.za)

**THE HEN HOUSE** can be found on Alpha Excelsior Guest Farm just off the R364, where you're served a pot of rooibos and a chunk of (frankly delicious) chocolate cake – also on the stoep but this time overlooking a stream lined with reeds. It's open from May to September for the bouldering season. The self-catering accommodation is available all year round. [www.alphaexcelsior.co.za](http://www.alphaexcelsior.co.za)

**THE ROOIBOS TEAHOUSE** Owners Sanet Stander and Marietjie Smit serve more than 100 types of flavoured/ blended rooibos tea at this Clanwilliam teahouse. You can also try their hour-long tasting or buy rooibos cosmetics to take home. [www.rooibosteahouse.co.za](http://www.rooibosteahouse.co.za)

**NANCY'S TEA ROOM** Their quiche alone is worth the drive from Cape Town. Situated on Clanwilliam's main road next to another local favourite, Reinhold's Restaurant, this tearoom serves light lunches and a cuppa or three either inside or on the patio. **027 482 2661**



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### THE WAENHUIS

The Waenhuis just outside Clanwilliam offers self-catering or B&B accommodation in an old wagon shed (dating back to 1820) on Patrysvlei farm. Sitting in the kitchen with a cup of tea and a rusk, you feel you're in a typical farmhouse, with pots and pans hanging from the ceiling and owner Sue Bergh's Ridgeback trying to get your attention. Swim in the pool, sit outside on the patio overlooking the garden or head off to explore the town. [sue@patrysvlei.co.za](mailto:sue@patrysvlei.co.za)

1948



Interest in rooibos dropped during World War II – so the Clanwilliam Tea Cooperative was formed to create a bit of a buzz.

1954



The Rooibos Tea Control Board took over from the Clanwilliam Tea Cooperative.

1993



A private organisation, Rooibos Ltd, was formed out of the Rooibos Tea Control Board, headed up by landowner Oloff Bergh's grandson, Martin.

2005



A nonprofit company, the South African Rooibos Council, was created to regulate the rooibos industry.

2006



Ever tried a rooibos cappuccino? An espresso made from the tea – the first of its kind – hit coffee shops and stores.

# HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT CUP OF TEA

Which came first: the milk or the tea? Along with a preference for a super-strong cuppa, author George Orwell - in an article for the *Evening Standard* - once insisted on adding milk second. But here's how rooibos connoisseurs Sanet Stander and Marietjie Smit recommend it's served. (We tend to agree.)



- 1 Use one teabag** - or if it's loose tea, one heaped teaspoon - per person.
- 2 Put in teapot** and pour in boiling water.
- 3 Let it brew** for a few minutes - either on the stove, in the microwave or using a tea cosy.
- 4 Pour** into a porcelain teacup and enjoy, preferably with no sugar or milk (they're like adding tomato sauce to your food: they'll mask the flavours). Include one teaspoon of honey if you prefer.

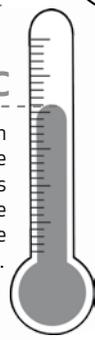
## 5 HEALTH BENEFITS

1. Rooibos can help skin conditions such as itching linked to dermatitis - plus it could reduce sun damage and wrinkles.
2. It can help to prevent or slow the spread of cancer.
3. The tea has anti-ageing, anti-hemolytic (it protects blood cells), anti-diabetic and anti-obesity effects.
4. It can prevent high cholesterol, inflammation and heart disease.
5. Rooibos contains small amounts of minerals such as calcium, iron, copper and zinc.

**2m**  
THE HEIGHT THAT ASPALATHUS LINEARIS, THE SHRUB USED TO MAKE ROOIBOS, CAN GROW TO.



**0°C to 48°C**  
Rooibos grows well in the Cederberg because the plant can adapt is able to the extreme temperatures in the area.



**8 000 to 10 000 tonnes**  
THE AMOUNT OF TEA BAGS ROOIBOS LTD PRODUCES EVERY YEAR.

**1kg**  
of wet tea equals 380g of dry tea.

THE LOCAL MARKET FOR ROOIBOS TEA IN 2010. **23%**



### What's in a name?

A French company would like to register "rooibos" as a trademark but do they want exclusive rights? That would mean companies can't export rooibos products to the country. "This is the start of a process, which will ultimately enable us to apply for Geographical Indicator status," Martin Bergh, MD of Rooibos Ltd, says. "This will prevent future instances of overseas companies attempting to trademark the generic brand name for commercial gain." Hopefully that means rooibos will be the new Champagne...

## Behind the scenes

The rooibos production hasn't actually changed much from the original methods, aside from better gadgets being available..

- 1 The plants are harvested by local farmers. Once delivered, the stems and leaves are cut so they are between 1mm and 10mm.
- 2 The plants are then placed in heaps out in the sun, doused with water, bruised and turned regularly for oxidisation to take place.
- 3 The heaps then ferment for 12 to 16 hours.
- 4 To stop the oxidisation process, the rooibos - now red and with a sweet smell - is spread out in the sun.
- 5 Once dry, the rooibos is collected, sealed and stored.



Scan this QR code to find out how rooibos tea is made.



## What's your FLAVOUR?

**A health niggler getting you down?** Sanet Stander and Marietjie Smit from the Rooibos Teahouse in Clanwilliam explain which flavoured rooibos tea may just help...

- Blueberry** helps relieve diarrhoea.
- Camomile** is used to calm anxiety and nerves.
- Cinnamon** lowers blood sugar.
- Cranberry** is beneficial for those who are detoxing.
- Ginger** includes anti-inflammatory properties.
- Liquorice** alleviates the symptoms of menopause, PMS and periods.
- Peppermint** calms sore throats and coughs.
- Rosehip** helps to prevent urinary and bladder infections.

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