

# Elgin Is The Place Where Apples Are Grown

Known internationally as the place where apples are grown, Elgin Valley is located in the spectacular Overberg region of South Africa, with the charming town of Grabouw as the commercial centre located just 70 kilometers to the southeast of Cape Town.



It's reputation as the apple-growing region of the country is well-deserved as the Elgin Valley produces up to 60% of the apples grown in South Africa, but is also known for its pears, olives, wine-making and cut flower industry and is a superb

getaway spot where frazzled city-dwellers can reconnect with nature, without having to travel for hours.

Surrounded by majestic mountains and featuring lush rolling hills that are a patchwork of vineyards, orchards and olive groves, the Elgin Valley has a range of accommodation options and outdoor activities on offer. The town of Grabouw was established on a farm called Grietjiesgat which had been bought by Wilhelm Langschmidt in 1856. He named the new settlement after his birthplace in Germany, Grabow. His wife opened a small trading store, and the town started to grow as Langschmidt sold off parts of his farm to new arrivals. He and his wife reportedly also did their bit to populate the town by producing 23 children, including three sets of twins.

Elgin Valley pioneers included the Molteno and Rawbone-Viljoen families and the Elgin station is located on land donated by the Moltenos. Oak Valley Estate was established in 1898 by Sir Antonie Viljoen and remains one of the prime vineyards on the Elgin Valley Wine Route. A medical doctor who qualified at Edinburgh University in Scotland, Sir Antonie was a member of the Cape Parliament and knighted in 1916 for his role in reconciling the Boer and British following the Second Boer War of 1899 to 1902. Viljoen established the first deciduous fruit orchards in the valley, which led to the development of the thriving apple industry today. The internationally enjoyed apple-juice marketed as Appletiser was developed on Applethwaite farm in the Elgin Valley in 1966.

**Attractions in or around Grabouw and the Elgin Valley include the Elgin Wine Route, the Green Mountain Eco Route, the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve, the Houwehoek Pass, the Van Der Stel Pass, Viljoens Pass and the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve.**

### **Elgin Valley Wine Estates**

The Elgin Valley is home to a number of wine farms, which do so well as a result of the cool climate, low pH of the soil and plentiful rainfall. Some of the farms include well known labels like Arumdale, ...

### **Elgin Wine Route**

The Elgin Valley is exquisite, with long stretches of forest and endless mountain peaks surrounding fruit orchards, and indeed Elgin is part of the Four Passes Fruit Route. The wines that have begun production ...

### **Green Mountain Eco Route**

Based on the Overberg Tourism map, the Green Mountain Eco Route starts on the other side of Sir Lowry's Pass, as you

enter Elgin Valley on the N2, from Cape Town. The Green Mountain Eco route is not only home ...

### **Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve**

The 42,000 ha Reserve stretches from Elgin in the south to beyond Villiersdorp in the north, and from the Stellenbosch mountains in the west, eastwards to the Groenland mountains. The entrance to the reserve ...

### **Houwhoek Pass**

To reach Houwhoek Pass, on the tarred N2, you will have to crest Sir Lowry's Pass first. In fact, there is a 25 kilometre stretch of road between the two passes, known as Cole's Pass, to add further confusion ...

### **Kogelberg Nature Reserve**

Lying within the southern extension of the Hottentots Holland Mountain range about 90 kilometres south-east of Cape Town and 8 kilometres from Kleinmond, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve has managed to remain ...

### **Van Der Stel Pass**

The Van der Stel Pass lies between Bot River and Villiersdorp, a beautiful pass that takes one via the Theewaterskloof Dam. This part of the Overberg is filled with flowers, birds and wines, with scenery to ...

### **Viljoen's Pass**

Viljoen's Pass cuts through the Groenland Mountains to follow a gorge through which the Palmiet River flows, linking Villiersdorp with Grabouw. Named after local apple pioneer, Sir Antonie Viljoen, the pass is ...