

Relax and recharge at De Hoop



By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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If yearning for a quiet and remote getaway surrounded by spectacular nature, yet still privy to a few basic luxuries, then the De Hoop Nature Reserve, a world heritage site situated in the Overberg region just a few hours' drive from Cape Town might be just what you're looking for.

I recently organised a two-night weekend stay at one of their self-catering Opstal Houses: the *Sacred Ibis*, for four friends and a baby. With three bedrooms (which can sleep up to six people) a spacious living room and dining area, kitchen, toilet and bathroom, not to mention huge garden and braai area, the Opstal House is a perfect accommodation option for a weekend away with friends or a leisurely family holiday.



Red wine and roaring fires

Arriving just before sunset and fairly worn out from a 48km dirt road drive with baby in tow, we were happy to check in to our home away from home. The Opstal House is a welcoming and pretty Cape Dutch-type house, the living room, a main gathering area equating to the heart of the home. With comfy couches and fireplace, this room makes for great cozying up around the fire on those chillier nights, a few glasses or bottles of red wine close to hand. An activity we did much of.



Because of our late arrival on the first night, we decided to dine at the reserve's charmingly retro restaurant: The Fig Tree. Equipped with a stellar and extensive wine list and a choice of two options on a three-course set menu, The Fig Tree offers stylish dining in a beautifully rustic setting. The menu options of the night were a choice between pea and mint soup or pear

and blue cheese salad for the starter and, for the main course, a choice between hearty and rich oxtail with mash or sweet chilli prawns with Asian noodles. For dessert, I wisely chose the sumptuous-and-goey Chocolate Volcano, although I'm sure that the Ginger Pannacotta was delightful as well.



Pesky baboons and Instagram-worthy scenery

The following morning we awoke to a treat of a day, windless still and sunny. Taking advantage of the fine weather we decided to explore the reserve further. On a pleasant few kilometres stroll around the De Hoop vlei, we spotted some of the wildlife on offer: bontebok, baboons, a yellow mongoose and numerous birds crossed our paths during the walk. However, the reserve also boasts Cape mountain zebra, eland, grey rhebuck, caracal and the occasional leopard! And, of course, its marine protected area which is one of the largest in Africa offers some of the best whale spotting in the world. On a side note, if staying at De Hoop keep a wary and watchful eye out for those cheeky baboons. Our neighbours informed us that a thieving and obviously not health conscious baboon had opened their kitchen door and made away with a loaf of white bread and bag of sugar. Keeping windows and doors closed and locked when not at your accommodation is greatly advised.



Our stay at De Hoop was a relaxing and reviving one, boasting much wildlife and whale spotting, Instagram-worthy scenery and comfortable, well-equipped accommodation. I would recommend a trip to this world heritage site for anyone in need of a little city life escape and battery recharge.

For more information or to make a booking, go to www.dehoopcollection.com.



ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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