

Oudtshoorn in the Klein Karoo has a certain unique charm all year round, but there are definite benefits to visiting in the colder months. If you're looking for a place to take yourself on a winter getaway with a difference, a trip to this town might be your best local travel decision yet.

It's warm in the Cango Caves

This impressive natural attraction is estimated to be around 20 million years old and has been nominated as one of the Seven Wonders of Southern Africa. Considering the sheer size of the caves and the spectacular rock formations found inside, that title doesn't seem to do them justice.

These ancient limestone caves maintain a comfortable temperature throughout the year. Exploring them during winter means you can escape the chilly weather and marvel at their natural beauty in a warm, inviting and, okay, slightly humid environment.

For the adventurous, you can also do the Adventure Tour, which means going deeper into the caves and braving your way through a few daunting crawl spaces. Squeeze yourself through "Tunnel of Love", where the rocks feel like they're hugging you from both sides, manoeuvre your way through "The Devil's Chimney" (yes, it's every bit as scary as it sounds), and slide out the other side through a formation known as "The Letterbox". If the temperature in the cave doesn't warm you up, the adrenalin definitely will.



Winter works best for stargazing

As cold air is usually clearer than warm air, winter is generally the best time of year to go stargazing. With 4 000ha of property and only nine luxurious suites to accommodate a maximum of 24 guests, (equating to at least 166ha of space per guest), Wildehondekloof Private Game Reserve, just outside of Oudtshoorn, is a great place to go if you want to get away from people and, in this case, the light pollution associated with populated areas. The remoteness of this game reserve makes it perfect for stargazing. For this guided activity, staff turn off all the external lights of the lodge to eliminate almost all light pollution within the 4 000-ha area to magnify the illumination of the night sky for a truly surreal experience.



Instead of a scarf, have you considered an ostrich neck massage?

If you're looking for an unconventional way to warm up your neck, an "ostrich massage" will probably do the trick. At Safari Ostrich Farm, you can embark on an ostrich tractor safari (yes, really). Then, with your back to these pretty intimidating-looking creatures, you can hold a container of ostrich food in one or both of your hands, and "enjoy" (if that's the right word) the sensation of these birds vigorously rubbing their necks against yours as they devour the food. It might not be the most luxurious massage you'll ever experience, but you won't forget it in a hurry!