

Get high: Why Elgin's Cape Canopy tour is bucket list worthy

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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It's no small wonder why people head to the mountains to recharge. The clean air and refreshing sense of space are like natural remedies for a mind bogged down with city smog and strife. Those of us living in the Western Cape are blessed to be surrounded by so many of them, and just an hour's drive from Cape Town lies one of the most magnificent, the Hottentots Holland Mountains.



Within the mountain range is a nature reserve of the same name, its conservation falling into the capable hands of Cape Nature. The 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. A World Heritage Site, the pristine reserve boasts rocky mountains, bright wildflowers and still natural pools.

While hiking, biking and kloofing are perfectly plausible ways to experience the beauty of the area, nothing beats getting an adrenalin-inducing bird's eye view while on a ziplining adventure with Canopy Tours.

Hair-raising adventure

You may be familiar with the company's tour operations in Tsitsikamma, Drakensberg, Magaliesberg, Karkloof, and further afield.

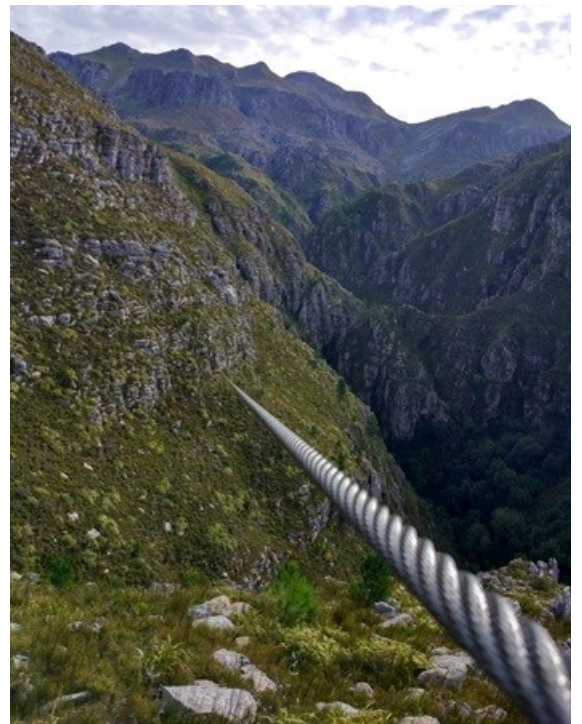
But the Elgin version has the longest slide of them all, measuring an eye-watering 320 metres and taking roughly 30 seconds to complete – that's three times longer than Tsitsikamma's longest zipline.

If this all sounds rather hair-raising, rest assured that from beginning to the very end, the team in Elgin inspires the utmost

confidence in one's safety.

The tour begins with an in-depth safety briefing, which essentially boils down to 'don't fiddle with the equipment' and 'trust your guides'.

Once we were all suited up, we jumped into a vehicle and began the 30 minute (somewhat bumpy) journey along the scenic 4x4 route to the first platform.



Mountainscapes and waterfalls

The ziplining course comprises 13 wooden platforms built into rocky precipices. Between them are 11 slides and a suspension bridge that some – mostly those afraid of heights – may feel to be the most daunting part of the experience.



That said, my significant other, for whom Table Mountain's cable car is even a challenge, tackled those ziplines with enthusiasm without batting an eyelid.

I put this down to three things. Firstly, a superior sense of safety: you're clipped onto the slides at three separate points, so there's a backup for the backup on the off-chance that anything goes awry. This, coupled with constant reassurance from the guides – and accompanying comic relief – sets one totally at ease.

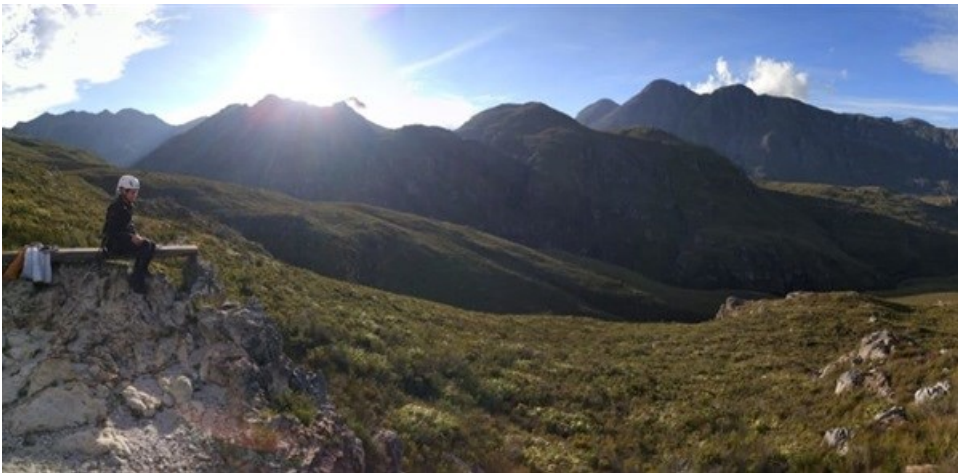


Secondly, even the fastest ziplines are a pleasure to glide along, with no jerky movements or scrambling to get onto the platform at the end, as I've experience with some other ziplining tours.



Last but certainly not least, the sheer beauty of the mountainscapes, gorges and waterfalls as you soar through the sky almost 1,000 metres above sea level, will replace whatever fear you may harbour with awe and exhilaration. Just don't forget to look down... that's half the fun.

Once you've completed the last slide, there's a 1km hike up the mountain back to the 4x4. While the trek is mostly uphill, you'll be rewarded with spectacular views of the valley and a fresh farm-style pie on your return to Canopy Tours' base.



More than a tour

Judging by its perennial number 1 spot on TripAdvisor's 'Things to do in Elgin', the Cape Canopy Tour was certainly a welcome addition to the region's attractions. And that's because it's so much more than a tour. Instead, I'd call it an intimate guided nature experience that will satisfy the desires of thrill-seekers and nature lovers alike.



A heart-pounding adventure activity set in an untarnished and previously inaccessible part of a World Heritage Site makes for a winning combination. Not only do you get an adrenalin fix, but you'll learn about the endemic fynbos and geology that exists within the scenic Elgin Valley.

Fast facts

The Cape Canopy Tour operates every day during daylight hours and in all weather conditions – whether it be rain, sun or snow. It takes approximately 4 to 5 hours to complete and is open to visitors aged from 5 through to 75 years old. The tour costs R895, which is inclusive of the park conservation fee and a light lunch at the on-site Sunbird Café.

As a bonus, you'll be emailed a certificate of completion as well as a video of your experience, so don't forget to smile!

View the video of my own bucket list worthy ziplining experience with Cape Canopy Tours below:

For more information and to book your own ziplining experience, visit [Cape Canopy Tours online](#) and keep up to date with all the action on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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