

Heating up with the Table Bay Hotel's winter high tea

 By Leigh Andrews

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"There's something comforting about sinking into a chair and dipping a biscuit into a cup of tea. It is a simple pleasure for everyone of all ages and in all seasons," says The Table Bay's pastry chef, Lee-Andra Govender. It takes something special to be selected in the cast of The Table Bay's High Tea, especially in winter. Here's why macarons, that delicate meringue-y take on the cookie sandwich and not the claggy, coconutty macaroon they're often confused with, are the dainty star of Govender's show this August!



The Table Bay Lounge. All images supplied.

On a breezy yet sunny winter's day, we were invited to sample the new winter high tea menu at the Table Bay Hotel.

Tucked into a corner of one of the country's top tourist spots, the V&A Waterfront, this is a classy experience of note and the perfect way to celebrate special events like birthdays and anniversaries.

Seated in the plush paisley, striped and floral nautical-themed Lounge where high tea is taken, you can't help but gaze wistfully through the high arch windows at the working harbour beyond, framed by Table Mountain itself, and that life-sized, sun-golden Cape fur seal statue – the [hotel's own mascot Oscar](#), which legend describes as the original protector and guardian of the Table Bay.

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Afternoon high tea option, which means before you can even think of nibbling your way through the main buffet table, you're presented with savoury canape delights right at your table.

Seasonal savoury canape delights

These include perfect-for-August warm, crumbly Thai fish cakes, coriander-potato spring rolls and cumin-chickpea pops, served with a yoghurt raita just perfect for dipping or drizzling over those hot, salty pastries.

There are also cold savouries like a smoked salmon-cream cheese beetroot tartlet; cheesy biscuit rounds with swirls of goats cheese and onion marmalade; a rosemary-and-garlic roast beef mini wrap drizzled with mustardy dijonnaise; and of course that high tea staple of mini, crustless cucumber and cream-cheese sandwich rectangles.

Pink tea and poppy-seed scones

By then we were ready to sip away our troubles, so ably assisted by Moudy, we sniffed a selection of the special TWG teas before making choices from the extensive selections, ranking from chocolate tea to red Christmas tea with heavenly berry notes, to the citrusy, classic rooibos, Early Grey and jasmine teas, and even the minty black-green blend Gnawa tea.

You can also start with a flute of bubbly or strong cappuccino if you so desire, but the Pink Flamingo tea is a must! It's floral, fruity, and, once fully steeped, pours out of the pot intriguingly pink. One cup down we found the second course, also served at the table, is just perfect for tea as it's the scone course.

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Produced since the 8th century A.D. - and with good reason! Macarons are proof that magic exists... • Spun from egg whites, ground almonds and a few other sweet ingredients, macarons are delicacies of beauty. • Sandwiched together with a strawberry chocolate ganache, these petite pastel treats are almost too pretty to eat. • #CanonChallenge2019

A post shared by The Table Bay Hotel (@tablebayhotelsa) on Feb 18, 2019 at 4:04am PST



seed scones, both piping hot and best served with unsalted butter, the hotel's own tangy homemade strawberry jam and dollops of fresh cream.

Baked buffet table bliss

Suitably 'sconed up', we were finally ready for the third course, where we were encouraged to help ourselves again and again from the lavish spread.

The selection is all-new, so if you've been to the Table Bay for high tea before, you're in for a new experience as nothing has been kept from the previous menu. The new seasonal tastes are set to remind you of the wonder of Winter through the flavours, ingredients and colours reminiscent of coffees, roibos teas, chocolates and winter fruits.



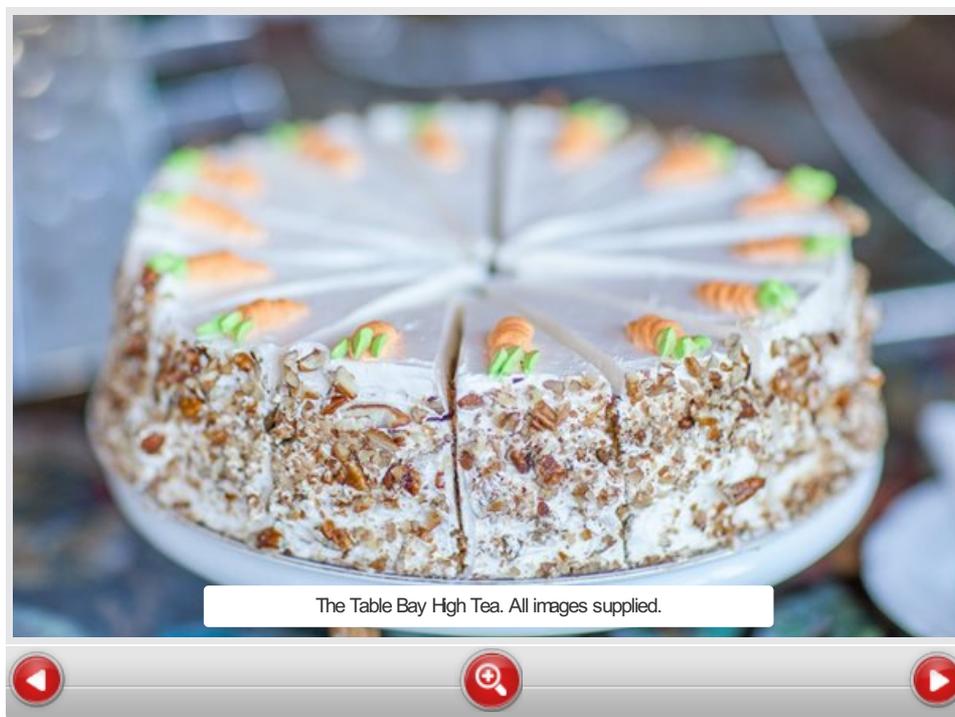
The Table Bay High Tea. All images supplied.



The sweet treats included a richy, mousse-y Belgian coffee cake; carrot-pecan tart topped with the sweetest icing carrots; a sensational orange-caramel-chocolate glazed gouette dome hiding pumpkin-cheesecake on gingerbread crumb; apple crisp slice and the 'naartjie' – a glossy baked marvel that houses a soft cake-y surprise; mini lemon meringue; and coconutty chocolate lamingtons.

Sounds good? That's only one side of the table! There's also a Pina Colada-inspired coconut pineapple verrine; sesame seed-strawberry and white-chocolate verinne; two-toned pistachio 'gem' dusted with gold leaf; decadent mocha hazelnut tart; dark chocolate-ginger truffles; Govender's TWG tea-inspired macarons, featuring red chai, #12 and Gnawa teas; as well as plump rooibos-latte marshmallows; more-ish chocolate beetroot brownies; and even a cheeseboard, for those still looking for a salty fix.

You're encouraged to have a fresh pot of tea with each course but we found the three-cup pots serve well throughout the treat, ending with a strong cappuccino.



A seasoned piano player set the mood across the room, with a roaring fire, specially printed pages of 'South Africa Today' news and a puzzle page, as well as views across to Table Mountain making this a truly iconic occasion.

The therapeutic art of macaron making

The winter high tea comes highly recommended – I sampled almost every single thing and was left in a happy chocolate

coma of sorts, but it's not all about the cacao: If you're on a gluten-free, dairy-free or vegan diet, you'll still find lots to enjoy.

Luckily, all the hotel staff are happy to point you in the right direction as you wander from the Lounge to the grounds and back again in an attempt to make more space. Govender herself invites guests to dabble in the 'therapeutic art of macaron making' themselves at home. Watch how she makes the Table Bay Hotel's signature August 2019 TWG-tea tinged macarons below, or book the next high tea sitting to sample them yourself!

It's clear to see why this has been regarded as one of the top-rated high tea venues in Cape Town since The Table Bay hotel's opening in 1997.

Leigh Andrews was a guest of The Table Bay Hotel. High tea is available from Monday to Sunday in The Table Bay's maritime-themed Lounge in two sittings, from 2pm to 3:30pm and again from 4pm to 5:30pm. The full high-tea experience, including three courses of savouries and sweets along with a pot of tea per course is R395 per person; while the Sinful Delight option, priced at R240, is your ticket to the dessert buffet. For bookings, call +27 21 406 5988 or email tbhres@suninternational.com and follow the hotel on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest updates.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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