

Low-carb tea and winter special offers

 By [Brian Berkman](#)

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A new Afternoon Tea offering is trying to entice a different market to one of Constantia's most classic and elegant hotels, [The Cellars-Hohenort](#) in Constantia, Cape Town.



Delia Harbottle, head chef at The Conservatory explains: “With the introduction of the low-carb high tea we have tried to eliminate the deep fried options and as much of the sugar as we could without making it a total Banting experience. The idea was to try to accommodate everyone’s taste. We substitute most of the sugary items with xylitol which is a very common sugar substitute and most taste buds won’t really pick it up.

The jam on the scones is also a sucrose-free strawberry jam. While the bread we are currently using for the open sandwiches is home-baked ciabatta, it is a vast improvement from the finger sandwiches of the past. We have kept the yummy fillings with far less bread. At The Cellars, we are excited to share how low carb can be every bit as indulgent and satisfactory as a regular high tea, if not more!”



For me as a committed low-carb, sugar-free adherent, the idea of Afternoon Tea, Cream Tea or High Tea is an institution I thought I'd never again enjoy. I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have low-carb Afternoon Tea spreads created just for me but this offering at The Cellars-Hohenort is a standard menu item which speaks volumes to the dramatic move away from tastes from traditional confectionery.

I loved grass-fed beef and peppadew sosaties as well as the crudités with hummus and lavash for dipping broccoli, cauliflower florets, cucumber batons and carrot sticks. The roasted red peppers and goat's cheese tarts are magnificent and while I wouldn't ordinarily eat a prawn Vietnamese rice paper roll, I loved the Asian hit. They've cleverly used quality dark chocolate and naturally sweet foods like beetroot to create a tiny mouthful (and very moreish) cupcake. The dainty sugar-free fresh fruit pavlovas are fabulous as is the yoghurt honey Panna cotta. They offer a homemade seed and grain bar too.



"For those who would still like to indulge in carbs, we have our signature scones on the menu, served with sugar-free strawberry jam and whipped cream cheese to keep calories at a minimum. Also on offer are delicious bite size open sandwiches, which include toppings such as coronation chicken, roast beef, red onion, horseradish and our favourite smoked salmon, chives on squid ink ciabatta", says Delia.

The Low-Carb High-Tea is offered daily between 3pm and 5pm and includes tea or coffee with pouring cream at a cost of R195 per person. We sat on the terrace overlooking the gardens and reflecting ponds but tea can be served in front of the fire in the sitting room or in the wonderfully sunny Conservatory front room.

Loved and lived in

I wondered what might feel or look different returning to The Cellars-Hohenort after the sad passing of founder Liz McGrath.

It was wonderful to see so many familiar staff faces at the hotel which is a testament to the management team and the McGrath family who retain control of The Collection. Even on an autumnal day, the gardens looked loved and lived in - something McGrath was especially passionate about.

There is a map to the gardens in each room which directs one to the historic eight camphor trees, now over 150 years in age. There is also the most spectacular window and garden gate with squirrels and frogs which was made by Plettenberg Bay resident, Professor Luck and took, understandably, over a year to create.



As we were walking around the gardens we found Patrick picking lemons and limes in the grove and one of the award-winning Greenhouse Restaurant chefs collecting leaves and herbs. It is wonderful to see that life, in all its forms, does go on.

The Premier Suite

We were luxuriously accommodated in a Premier Suite which is decorated in an elegant contemporary style and situated in what was probably the original cellars. I loved having big windows and French doors in the suite which welcomes the light inside. This is the type of accommodation which one would be comfortable in for a long stay - as many of the returning guests to the Cellars-Hohenort enjoy. It includes a kitchen area with a Nespresso machine, fridge, and complimentary mini-bar as well as a sink.



There are two swimming pools, one heated, but we felt too wintery to venture in. Winter is a wonderful time to visit Constantia not only because of being able to cosy up but also because hotel rates are much more affordable and the Conservatory Restaurant has a special offer menu which represents a 25% saving. Visit their website for deals and you could enjoy a staycation at a very affordable rate.

We just loved walking around, dodging the ducks who made the pond outside our suite their home, with our scarves wrapped around our heads breathing in the crisp cool air and sweetness from the iceberg roses at the reception entrance.

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