

A FLIP-FLOP FOR EVERY FOOT

UNDER R200

PICK 'N PAY MAUI SLOPS
Yes, they cost R26!

Considering how much you can pay for a pair of slops, I was surprised by how much shoe you get for this price. The Maui's are comfy but probably not very durable. The straps are well secured, though, so they shouldn't pop out of the sole when you're running after the ice-cream van. Watch out: The soles are smoother than a monk's pate so be careful in the rain unless you're into ice skating.

R26 picknpay.co.za

PETRA THONG
Back to nature

This slop is rustic but classy. The moulded rubber outsole with its raised heel and curvy contours makes your feet look good; while the cotton strap and jute inner make your feet feel good. Jute is a tough natural fibre and it does wonders for sweaty feet. In my book, it's the best value-for-money slop featured.

R75 capeunionmart.co.za

Flip-flops, slip-slops, thongs, jandles, plakkies... Whatever you choose to call them, they're as summery as braaivleis on Boxing Day and everybody needs at least a pair. But how different can one piece of rubber be from the next? Read on and find out!

MOOI FLIP-FLOPS
The Midas touch

At first sight, these are just like any other pair of ordinary rubber flops, but closer inspection reveals that they have arch support and the straps are tethered inside the sole, so you can't see their ends if you turn the shoe upside down. They're lightweight and the arch support makes for a pleasant walking experience. The price may seem steep, but delivery is free... and they come in a gold box!

R180 mooishoes.com

IPANEMA FLIP-FLOPS
Viva, Brazil!

These super-comfy slops are trendy enough to wear at night and casual enough to wear to the beach. Unlike most of their competitors, Ipanemas are made from plastic, not rubber. This means they look like ordinary slops, but they last much longer and are 100% recyclable.

R160 woolworths.co.za

R200 – R300

TSONGA FULATI TSLOPS
Give something back

These days, just about every company is trying to claim some kind of social or ecological high ground, but Tsonga is really putting its money where its mouth is. Tslops are hand-made from local leather by rural women in KZN, who actually own the mini-factories (housed in shipping containers) that they work in. Tslops only come in one style, but they're available with different-coloured straps. The outsole is tough but flexible and the inner is made of soft, comfy suede. However, we did find the bump in the sole around the toe-post a little irritating.

R225 tslops.co.za

QUIKSILVER
HALEIWA

More flip than flop

This slop is different enough to stand out and it's made from a very soft, spongy material (TPE or thermoplastic elastomer, if you're interested), which makes it comfy to wear. The rubber outsole is a bit tougher and rougher to aid traction, but this isn't an all-terrain shoe; stick to the beach if you want them to last more than one summer. The toe straps are very elastic, which seems cool at first but does result in a loud (read "annoying") flip with every step.

R250 quiksilver.co.za

HAVAIANAS BRAZIL
Keep up with the Joneses

Sometimes, it's all about the label. You can get the exact same slop without the Brazilian flag on the strap for R70 less, but then why would you be wearing Havaianas in the first place? These classic rubber slops in a variety of colours have taken off over the past few years. They're comfortable and long-lasting, but whether you can justify the extra cash for the brand is your call.

R219 havaianas.com

CUSHE FORENSIC
Smooth criminals

These shoes feature a footprint design on the inner soles that could come in handy if you can't tell left from right. But that's the only gimmick. The soles are exceptionally spongy, making them a pleasure to wear. They have a slightly raised heel to take the pressure off your instep; and they look pretty cool, especially when the footprints are hidden away. The rubber outsole is solid but it's coated in canvas (not sure why), which made them a bit slippery on my wooden floors.

R300 sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

R300 –
R400

HI-TEC V-LITE LANAI THONG

Put a thong in your step

Practical rather than pretty, these lightweight, sturdy slops for women go way beyond the old-fashioned *plakkie*. They are moulded for a comfortable fit, they've got a soft inner footbed and sturdy carbon rubber outsoles that promise "multi-directional traction". Perfect for kicking around a campsite or taking the dog for a walk.

R350 capeunionmart.co.za



BEACH RELIGION LEAF

Shoes by the people

Ever thought of yourself as a shoe designer? Log on to the Beach Religion website, download the slop template, and get going. All their designs are submitted by the public and voted for on the website. The shoes themselves don't change, just the pictures on them do. The outsoles are tough as nails, the all-synthetic components make them totally amphibious and the wafery inner is like a mattress for your foot.

R300 beachreligion.com



FREESTYLE SURF THONG

Made to last

These are more Series 2 Landy than Rav 4. Locally made from top-quality leather with indestructible thermoplastic rubber outsoles and blended leather insoles, Freestyle assures me these shoes will still be going strong in 10 years' time. When you first put them on they feel a bit stiff, but as with any leather product they need to be worn in. They look great too: The dark chocolate colour is fetching and the stitching adds a touch of class. They're also the only slop featured here that I'd use in self-defence!

R370 veldskoen.co.za

OCEAN MINDED SANDSCAPE

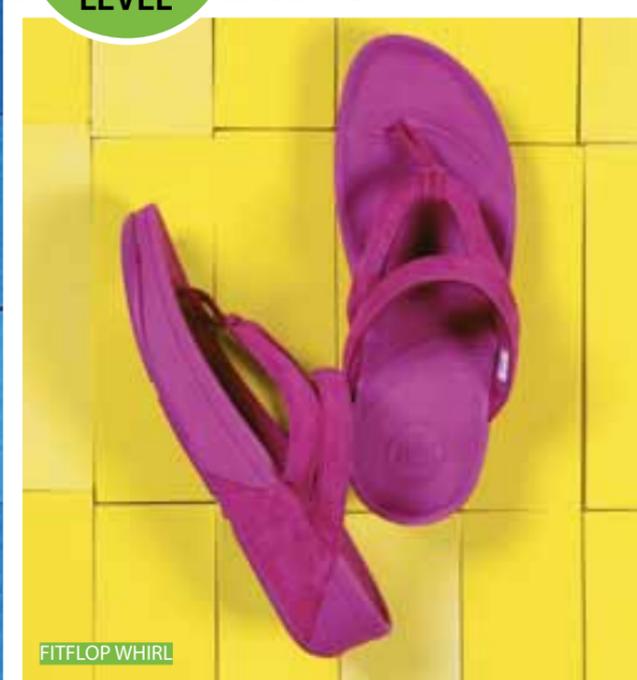
Take the beach with you

If you can't bear the thought of not having sand beneath your feet, this is the shoe for you. When I first saw the topographic foam inner I wasn't convinced, but it only took a few minutes of wearing them to change my mind. Whoever said no to a foot massage? The slops are lightweight and sturdy with a tough, non-slip sole and they're eco-friendly too, made from recycled tyres, organic cotton and water-based glue.

R360 mycrocs.co.za



TAKING SLOPS TO THE NEXT LEVEL



FITFLOP WHIRL

FITFLOP WHIRL

Be kind to your feet

Fitflops are designed by a professor in biomedical engineering and feature the patented "Microwobbleboard" in the mid-sole – a section of less-dense foam that apparently activates your leg muscles, thereby making your feet less sore. You also apparently burn more calories. Yes, these shoes are good for you; many users say you'll even feel happier wearing them. The only thing is, all the medical stuff results in a chunky sole that makes them look quite dorky. This suede offering in pink is about as stylish as a Fitflop gets.

R800 fitflop.co.za

REEF FANNING

Bottoms up!

On the face of it, these are comfortable slops with wide straps. They look like they're made of leather, but the upper is 100% synthetic and the sole is rubber, so you can definitely get them wet. The downside is that they made

my feet feel a bit clammy. However, most people buy the Fanning for what lies beneath: Built into the sole of each shoe is a bottle opener! Be warned: Take your shoe off before trying to open your Black Label...

R480 zando.co.za (free delivery)

SALOMON RX BREAK THONG

Beauty is only skin-deep

On the shelf in the shop, these shoes aren't very appealing. Not only are they expensive, they're not particularly attractive either. That said, they'd become a lot more appealing if you'd just lugged a 25 kg pack up Krakadouw Peak, or limped over the finishing line of the Ironman. The inner sole is designed to "relax and repair" your feet after hours of abuse, and the Contagrip outsole is grippy and durable. The soles are even non-marking, in case you're up for a game of squash after your marathon!

R600 capeunionmart.co.za



REEF FANNING



SALOMON RX BREAK THONG



WISH LIST



Sleep where you surf

If you're a surfer and you're tired of sleeping in the back of your bakkie at Elands, check out the Wavecave – a board bag crossed with a tent!

What is it? It's a bag to transport and protect your surfboards, which becomes a tent or sun shelter.

Why would you want it? Because lugging a tent and a surfboard around is a pain, especially if you're flying to somewhere exotic with your board. Also, if you're going to the beach for the day, it's nice to know you have instant shade at hand.

But I have a longboard... The Wavecave is available in three different sizes. The biggest bag can accommodate a 9'6" board. There are also bags that can carry two or four boards.

How does it work?

- 1** Find a level piece of ground and open the bag. Take the board out.
- 2** The tent part is stored in an inner pocket of the bag. Remove it and attach it to the padded sides, which form the base of the tent. The poles are already in place.
- 3** Zip the tent onto the bag and peg it down if necessary. Done!

Will it survive a storm? Although the tent material is waterproof, it's only one layer thick. In other words, there's no flysheet to give you extra protection. It will keep out a drizzle but maybe not a tropical deluge in Mozambique.

Price: R3 000 – R4 000 depending on the size of the bag.

Where can I buy one? From most good independent surf stores in Cape Town, like Lifestyle Surf Shop (☎ lifestylesurfshop.co.za). If you're not in Cape Town or if you'd like to know more, visit ☎ commitsa.com



– Lynne Fraser