



UNLIMITED AFRICA: GROWING AFRICA'S TOURISM ECONOMY



WISHING YOU A PRODUCTIVE AND INSPIRING AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2026

On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, I am pleased to welcome delegates, exhibitors, buyers, media, and tourism leaders to Durban for the 2026 edition of Africa's Travel Indaba, one of the continent's leading tourism trade platforms.

In line with our theme, "Unlimited Africa: Growing Africa's tourism economy", Africa's Travel Indaba highlights tourism's essential role in economic growth, job creation, investment, and cultural exchange across our continent. It provides a valuable platform for African destinations to share their stories, strengthen partnerships, and access new opportunities in a competitive global tourism market.

South Africa and the African continent are open, competitive, and ready for growth. Indaba showcases our destination's unique blend of iconic experiences and diversity, spanning wildlife, natural landscapes, culture,

heritage, and community-based tourism. This invitation aligns with our global brand campaign, South Africa Awaits. Come find Your Joy.

This year's show features enhancements designed to deepen engagement and deliver greater value, with BONDAY focused on connection, discovery, and growth, and sees us placing greater emphasis on technology integration to enable dynamic, future-focused discussions, while also celebrating sector milestones and highlighting industry-led initiatives shaping tourism.

I encourage all delegates to participate in the diverse program of activities throughout the week. Highlights include Beachfront Sustainability Awareness activations, daily panel discussions at the Media Centre, BOMA Talks, and Speed Marketing sessions, all designed to foster business connections, market access and information on the tourism sector.

Please visit the official Africa's Travel Indaba website regularly for schedules, updates, and featured events.

We remain committed to strengthening intra-African travel and regional partnerships, while also prioritising Southeast Asia as a key growth region. Southeast Asian markets offer significant potential for leisure and group travel, helping us diversify our source markets and enhance resilience. Continued participation from across Africa is essential for increasing visitor numbers and building a more integrated, sustainable tourism ecosystem.

We are confident that this week's show will be an inclusive and impactful platform, driving meaningful growth for South Africa and the continent.

We wish all delegates a productive and inspiring Africa's Travel Indaba 2026.



MAGGIE SOTY,
DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM



WELCOME TO AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2026.

Join us at the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority stand, DEC1G07, at the iconic Durban ICC, where key connections, trade opportunities and destination insights come together. Engage with our team and SMMEs, discover curated tourism offerings, and explore partnership opportunities across leisure, business events and film.

From unhurried coastal moments to deeply rooted cultural encounters shaped by heritage, rhythm and flavour, KwaZulu-Natal invites you to slow down and connect with something real. A destination where relaxation is felt and authenticity lives. When the business of Indaba fades, let the journey continue in KwaZulu-Natal.

Visit us today and be part of shaping the future of travel.

KwaZulu-Natal: There's so much more to discover



SCAN FOR MORE INFO

BONDay PROGRAMME

Time	Event	Venue
09H30 - 09H35	BONDAY OPENING REMARKS	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
09H35 - 09H45	BONDAY - WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF INSPIRATIONAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
09H45 - 10H05	BONDAY - INSPIRATIONAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS: UNLIMITED AFRICA: GROWING AFRICA'S TOURISM ECONOMY	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
10H05 - 10H10	BONDAY INTRODUCTION OF PANEL DISCUSSION	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
10H10 - 10H55	BONDAY PANEL DISCUSSION: AFRICA'S NARRATIVE AS THE WORLD'S TOURISM POWERHOUSE	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
10H55 - 11H10	TED TALK	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
11H10 - 11H25	TEA BREAK & NETWORKING	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
11H25 - 13H05	STREAM ONE - UNLIMITED AFRICA - SPORT AS A CATALYST FOR TOURISM GROWTH AND GLOBAL INFLUENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:25-12:10 Masterclass: Sports Tourism Case Study - Measuring What Matters: Sports Sponsorship Impact 12:15-13:00 Panel Discussion: Sports Tourism - Measuring What Matters: Sports Sponsorship Impact 	SOUTH FOYER: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
11H25 - 13H05	STREAM TWO - AFRICA'S EXCELLENCE - CULTURE AND CONTENT AS DRIVERS OF GLOBAL TOURISM DEMAND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:25-12:10 TikTok Masterclass - From Bucket List To Booking 12:15-13:00 Panel Discussion: Culture as Currency: How Music, Art, Fashion, Gastronomy Drive Travel 	ROOM 12 ICC: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
13H05 - 14H00	LUNCH & NETWORKING	DESIGNATED VENUES: REGISTERED EXHIBITORS, BUYERS, MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDERS
15H00 - 17H30	AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA BEACHFRONT SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS	NORTH BEACH, DURBAN: ALL ATI DELEGATES (BY RSVP)

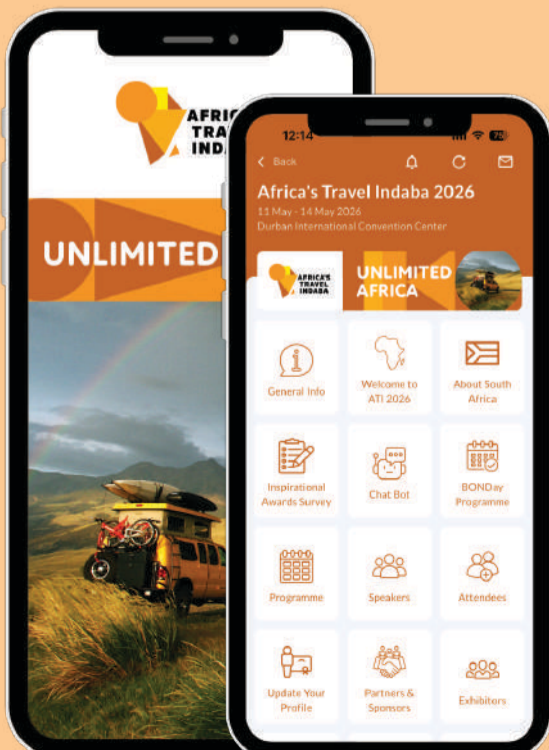
* correct at time of printing



UNLIMITED AFRICA

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'MEGA LEKKER ESCAPE': A WIN FOR SOUTH AFRICA

South African Tourism Australia and New Zealand delivered its third and most mega 'Mega Lekker Escape' earlier this year.

South African Tourism Australia and New Zealand delivered its third and most mega 'Mega Lekker Escape' earlier this year, sending 110 Australian and New Zealand travel agents and media on eleven simultaneous fam trips across South Africa, each led by an Australian or New Zealand wholesaler, before culminating in a two-day training event at the Sun City resort in the Pilanesberg game reserve.

Spanning eight provinces, the fam trips travelled across the country to discover spectacular scenery, vibrant cities, awe-inspiring wildlife, captivating culture and the unparalleled hospitality of South Africa.

More than just a familiarisation trip however, the 'Mega Lekker Escape' was designed to showcase South Africa's commitment to sustainability and conservation, community engagement, and cultural diversity; to promote geographic spread; and support inclusive economic participation of SMMEs - small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) - as the groups explored beyond the main tourism attractions to discover hidden gems, delivering market access to a total of 60 SMMEs.

Community and conservation-based initiatives

Each group had the opportunity to get involved in community and conservation-based initiatives such as visiting Shamwari's Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre which helps to care for sick, injured, abandoned or orphaned animals; Pack for a Purpose to provide school supplies for underprivileged students; visiting !Kwa ttu San Heritage Centre, dedicated to preserving and sharing the living culture of the indigenous San people; camping in the spectacular Cape Vidal after which sleeping bags were donated to the local community; or a guided Vulture conservation experience in the De Hoop nature reserve.

The training event at Sun City further extended and enriched the fam trip experiences, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration between the Australian and New Zealand delegates and South African trade partners.

Attended by 200 participants with the addition of local DMCs, experience and property representatives, airline partners South African Airways, Qantas and FedAir, and provincial tourism boards, the two-day event included one-to-one meetings between wholesalers and operators as well as evening functions presented by South African comedians Tumi Morake and Mojak Lehoko including a trivia night and a presentation evening during which each group presented highlight videos of their trips.

First-hand experience is pivotal

And as a Mega Lekker Escape first, 9 SMME companies were hosted at Sun City to present at Speed Marketing sessions, including the ground-breaking Black Mambas - the world's



first all-female anti-poaching unit. Finally, on the day of their departure all participants were treated to lunch on the world's most luxurious train, hosted by Rovos Rail.

Notably, 100% of the travel agents involved were first-time visitors to South Africa or first-timers to the areas they were exploring. This initiative offered them the benefit of first-hand experience, critical to the nation's post-Covid recovery after the pandemic caused a 40% turnover in the trade landscape.

This first-hand experience is pivotal to fostering a deep appreciation and understanding of a destination, overcoming preconceived notions around barriers and instilling confidence to impart that knowledge to clients. And the results are evident, with up to 90% of agents booking trips to South Africa within the first year upon their return from a Mega Lekker Escape.

This success has contributed to the Mega Lekker Escape's growing momentum, with this year seeing more than a 10% increase in participating agents and media, as well as growing collaboration across the tourism value chain, attracting 200 delegates, up from 150 the year prior.

This year also saw an increase in participating Australian and New Zealand wholesalers to ten - Above and Beyond Holidays, Adventure Destinations, The Africa Safari Co., Adventure World (AU and NZ), Bench, Inspiring Vacations, MW Tours, This Is Africa, Viva Expeditions and World Journeys, who arranged and hosted the fam trips.



A win for South Africa

The initiative is certainly a win for South Africa. Its execution alone contributes approximately ZAR12 million (AUD\$1.2million) into the economy through airlift with the national carrier, spend in-country and activation. Thereafter with up to 90% of travel agents going on to make a booking of at least two people in the first year, who may each spend the average of approximately ZAR24K (AUD\$2400) in-country, they're expected to deliver approximately ZAR5 million (AUD\$500K) just in year one upon the conclusion of each event.

South African Tourism's General Manager: Global PR, Communications & Stakeholder Relations Thandiwe Mathibela said "We say in our brand campaign 'Come Find Your Joy. South Africa Awaits.' And Joy is a feeling, one that must be found through lived experience, which is why an initiative such as the Mega Lekker Escape, which offers just that, is imperative to imparting this message and meeting our goals."

"I have no doubt that our Australian and New Zealand visitors have found just that in South Africa. Perhaps it's even been life-changing. It certainly has the potential to change the lives of the people here in South Africa, as tourism not only contributes to our GDP, but ensures that people have access to socio-economic services, opportunities and choices, as it creates jobs, generates incomes and establishes viable communities."

Australia and New Zealand are key contributors to that end. Leaving Covid well and truly behind them, these countries have exceeded their pre-Covid arrivals into South Africa to become two of the fastest growing regions for South Africa.

Over the course of 2025 Australia delivered over 121,361 arrivals. That's 23.2% ahead of the previous year and 8.9% ahead of pre-Covid numbers.

NZ delivered 23,324 arrivals. That's 15.8% ahead of the previous year and a significant 42.13% ahead of pre-Covid numbers.

And 2026 has seen that trajectory continue for Australasia, with the first quarter delivering 6.5% ahead of the year prior.





ATTA®: AIR TRAVEL TO AFRICA GROWING DESPITE GLOBAL DISRUPTION

Y-o-Y air capacity to Africa +7.9% for North Africa and +4.6% for Sub-Saharan Africa for May and June travel despite capacity dip compared to pre-war.

New analysis released today by ATTA® – the African Travel & Tourism Association – reveals aviation growth to the continent for the early peak season months of May and June compared to the same months in 2025.

Using new comparative aviation data analysis produced by the leading data intelligence company for travel and tourism and ATTA® newly appointed knowledge partner, Data Appeal and Mabrian (part of Almwave / Almviva Group), ATTA® examined airline schedules before the escalation of the Iran war on 28 February 2026 and compared them with updated schedules for May and June 2026 travel.

The findings show that global airlines have reduced worldwide seat capacity by -2.1% as carriers respond to airspace disruption, operational uncertainty, rising fuel prices and increasing insurance costs.

The strongest impacts are closest to the conflict zone:

- Western Asia has seen seat capacity fall by -10.1%
- Southeast Asia recorded a -7.2% reduction

- Sub-Saharan Africa saw a more moderate decline of -2.9%
- North Africa recorded a -2.1% adjustment

But, despite the disruption when comparing May–June 2026 schedules against the same period in 2025:

- North Africa is still recording +7.9% year-on-year growth
- Sub-Saharan Africa remains positive at +4.6%
- Global seat capacity overall is up +2.3%
- Western Asia remains the only major region still in contraction at -4.9% year-on-year

Virginia Messina Group CEO of ATTA® said: “The conflict has created immediate operational challenges for aviation globally. Airlines are dealing with disrupted corridors, higher fuel prices and longer routing times.

“But Africa’s skies have remained open and operating smoothly with air capacity up approximately 6% in average year-on year. While there has been some short-term schedule adjustment, the continent continues to outperform many regions globally and the



figures underline Africa’s growing strategic importance. Members are telling us customers are either seeking reassurance, but still travelling or postponing trips rather than cancelling.”

The analysis also shows that Africa’s international connectivity continues to expand despite the current volatility.

In 2026:

70 non-African countries will operate direct flights to Africa

More than 89 million inbound seats are scheduled to the continent

Total inbound capacity is still forecast to grow by +4.4% year-on-year

Europe remains Africa’s largest external aviation market with more than 50.7 million inbound seats scheduled for 2026, growing

by +5.6%, while GCC countries continue to play a critical role in connecting Africa globally despite regional disruption.

Among the strongest-growing origin markets to Africa are: Russia (+23.1%); Portugal (+13.4%); Italy (+11%); China (+11%); India (+9.3%); United Kingdom (+8.6%) and Türkiye (+8.6%).

The report also highlights strong momentum within Africa itself. Intra-African connectivity is forecast to exceed 112 million seats in 2026, up +6.6% year-on-year, with particularly strong growth in medium-haul and long-haul regional routes.

South Africa remains Africa’s largest intra-continental market with 24.6 million seats, while Nigeria (+14.9%), Algeria (+15.9%), Mauritius (+16.6%) and Madagascar (+14.6%) are among the fastest-growing aviation markets on the continent.

According to Carlos Cendra, Chief Marketing Officer at Data Appeal: “Africa has a clear medium- to long-term opportunity to leverage growth in both international and regional connectivity to accelerate its tourism sector. In a global market where demand is highly fluid and shifts rapidly in response to the geopolitical environment, the continent now holds a competitive advantage to emerge as a compelling alternative for travellers seeking sustainable and authentic new experiences.”

ATTA® says the latest figures demonstrate that while geopolitical instability is reshaping global aviation patterns, Africa is increasingly being viewed as both a resilient tourism destination and an emerging strategic aviation corridor.

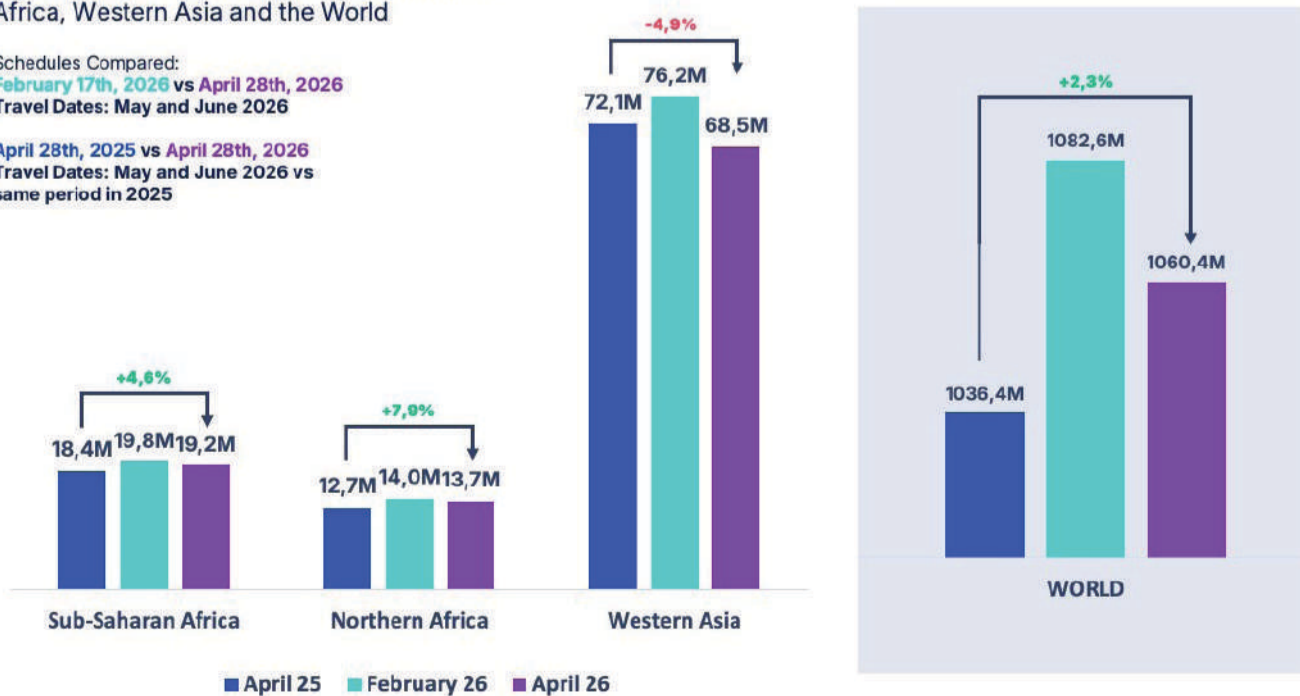
Africa Connectivity Shows Resilience as Global Capacity Adjusts to Iran War Disruptions



Air Capacity Schedule Comparison. Pre and Post Iran War. Seats Availability Scheduled to Africa, Western Asia and the World

Schedules Compared:
February 17th, 2026 vs April 28th, 2026
Travel Dates: May and June 2026

April 28th, 2025 vs April 28th, 2026
Travel Dates: May and June 2026 vs same period in 2025



Source: Mabrian Travel Intelligence & Data Appeal



Visit ATTA® at Africa’s Travel Indaba Hall ICC2 Stand Number ICC716

UK RECLAIMS TOP SPOT AS SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING OVERSEAS MARKET

The United Kingdom has returned as South Africa's largest overseas source market, signalling strong recovery in a key high-value segment.

The United Kingdom has reclaimed its position as South Africa's leading overseas source market, with more than 400,000 UK visitors travelling to the country in 2025. The figure represented the strongest annual performance since the pandemic and marked a notable milestone in South Africa's broader international tourism recovery.

Arrivals data showed sustained momentum throughout the year, culminating in 11% year-on-year growth in December 2025.

According to early data from Statistics SA for January to March 2026, total overseas arrivals reached 681,677, up 6.3% year-on-year, with Europe remaining the dominant long-haul region, contributing 479,498 arrivals.

The UK remained South Africa's top overseas source market for this period. In March 2026 alone, 45,902 British tourists visited the country, accounting for 20.5% of all overseas arrivals. UK arrivals increased by 16.4% compared to March 2025. Germany followed with 39,913 arrivals, while the United States recorded 31,268 arrivals.

The performance reflected continued confidence among UK travellers and reinforced the market's importance as one of South Africa's most valuable long-haul source markets.

Strong Value for Money

The UK's return to the top position has been underpinned by several enduring strengths. South Africa continues to offer strong value for money in the UK market, while direct air access, relative ease of travel, and the breadth of the destination's tourism offering remain compelling. From safari experiences and coastal landscapes to cultural heritage, food, wine and city-based travel, South Africa continues to appeal to a broad range of British travellers.

According to South African Tourism, visitor behaviour trends also pointed to deepening market confidence. First-time UK arrivals increased by 16% in 2025, indicating successful destination conversion among new travellers. At the same time, repeat visitation remained exceptionally strong. Travellers who had

visited South Africa more than nine times increased by 24%, reflecting the destination's continued ability to retain loyalty over time.

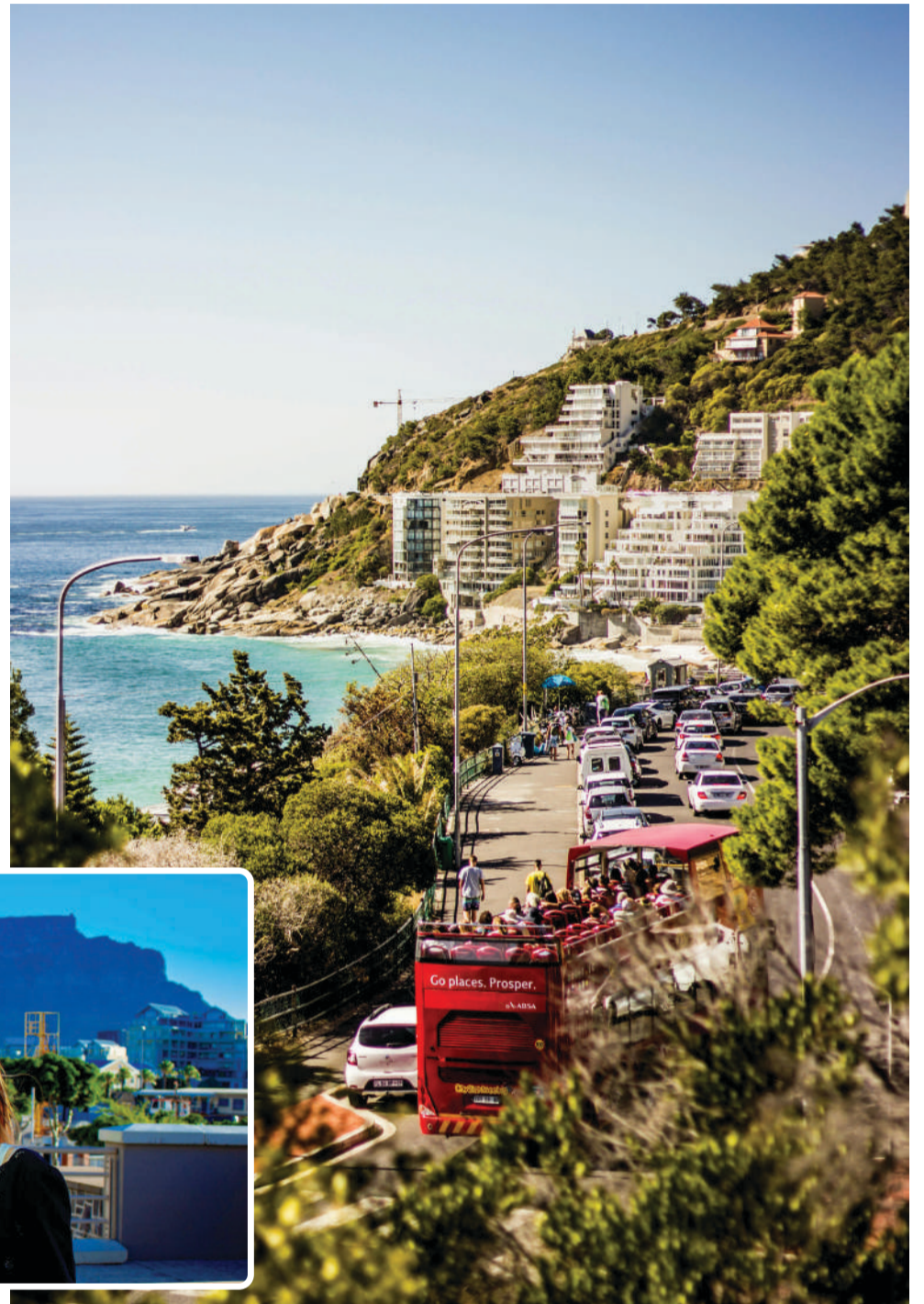
Family Travel Destination

Family travel also continued to strengthen. Visits from UK families travelling with children under the age of 18 rose by 12% when compared with both 2019 and 2024 levels. This growth suggested expanding confidence in South Africa's appeal as a multi-generational leisure destination.

The economic contribution of the UK market remained substantial. Visitor spend increased by 9.5% in 2025, contributing R6.9 billion to the South African economy. The average length of stay held firm at 13 nights, underlining the market's significance not only in terms of arrival numbers but also in direct tourism yield.

Return intent remained especially encouraging, with more than 90% of UK travellers indicating that they planned to visit South Africa again.

Looking ahead, the outlook for 2026 remained positive. Key tourism milestones, including the 100th anniversary of Kruger National Park, alongside new accommodation developments such as the forthcoming Club Med Beach & Safari resort and The Cape Town EDITION, are expected to further strengthen South Africa's appeal in the UK market.



GARDEN ROUTE NAMED THE WORLD'S BEST ROAD TRIP

South Africa's iconic Garden Route has been ranked the world's number one road trip by Autotrader, achieving an impressive score of 90.6 out of 100.

For the global study, Autotrader partnered with Jim R N Dale to develop the Perfect Driving Weather Score - an index measuring the weather conditions that make driving feel safest, easiest, and most enjoyable.

Using a range of criteria including humidity, ground temperature, number of clear days, visibility quality, and wind speed, the Garden Route emerged as the world's

top-performing road trip destination.

"Between Mossel Bay and Storms River, this 300km stretch of road consistently delivers what we all dream of when we hit the road; clear skies for most of the year which give drivers the opportunity to take in the views of the Indian Ocean Coast, gentle winds and comfortable temperatures. The Garden Route takes you from ocean, to forest, to mountains and is as close to perfect as driving weather gets."

At the heart of this celebrated route lies the Garden Route National Park, which spans several key sections of the journey and offers an

array of immersive nature-based experiences.

The Wilderness Section, situated along the N2, is renowned for its tranquil waterways, rich birdlife, forest cabins, and outdoor activities such as canoeing and mountain biking.

Further along the route, the Knysna Section provides access to lush indigenous forests and estuarine ecosystems. Visitors can explore the estuarine and forest environments, with activities including visits to the Thesen Island area to see the endangered Knysna seahorse, as well as forest trails in Diepwalle and scenic viewpoints.

The Tsitsikamma Section features rugged coastal scenery at Storms River Mouth, with accommodation options, camping sites, and access to the famous suspension bridge.

The Garden Route National Park remains a key part of this internationally recognised route, offering diverse landscapes where forests, rivers, mountains, and coastline meet.

Visitors are encouraged to experience this globally recognised journey and the national park that forms part of it.





KENYA INTRODUCES 30% INCENTIVE TO BOOST CRUISE TOURISM AND DRIVE PARK VISITS

Kenya has unveiled a 30 percent group incentive for cruise travellers visiting Kenya's national parks, in a strategic move aimed at enhancing the country's "Cruise-to-Park" experience and increasing visitor conversion from the coast to inland attractions.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), is designed to capitalise on the growing cruise tourism circuit along the Kenyan coast by offering curated excursions to key destinations, including Tsavo East National Park, Tsavo West National Park, Amboseli National Park, and the country's renowned Marine Parks.

More accessible destinations

KWS director general, Erustus Kanga,

in his announcement, invited visitors to explore Kenya's iconic parks and reserves, highlighting the country's exceptional biodiversity and unique wildlife experiences.

He expressed confidence that the discounted rates would make these destinations more accessible and that visitors would leave with memorable and enriching impressions of Kenya.

Currently, approximately 20 percent of cruise passengers extend their journey to Kenya's parks and reserves.

"Through the introduction of competitive group rates, the government aims to double this number to 40 percent, unlocking greater value from high-spending international

visitors while strengthening linkages between coastal and inland tourism."

Seamless visitor experiences

He reaffirmed the authority's commitment to efficient port services and seamless visitor experiences.

To operationalise the initiative, KWS will pilot the programme with leading tour operator Pollmans Tours & Safaris, leveraging structured group travel to enhance efficiency, coordination, and visitor experience.

The pilot phase will later be scaled to include global operators such as Abercrombie & Kent.

The 30 percent incentive is expected to

deliver wide-ranging and compounding benefits across Kenya's tourism ecosystem.

On visitor numbers, the structured group rates are designed to drive large-scale bookings and boost park visitation from cruise arrivals.

Operationally, the group travel model ensures seamless logistics, reduced congestion, and enhanced security across park entry points.

The initiative further advances sustainable conservation by integrating the KWS Conservation Donation Portal into cruise itineraries, enabling visitors to directly contribute to the preservation of Kenya's natural heritage.

TOURVEST LAUNCHES TULIA TO OPEN UP EAST AFRICAN SAFARI TRAVEL TO A WIDER MARKET

Tourvest Accommodation has launched Tulia, a new safari brand designed to deliver high-quality, experience-led travel at a more accessible price point, alongside the acquisition of the Wild Frontiers Uganda properties and activities business.

The move strengthens Tourvest's presence in East Africa and expands its portfolio across three distinct offerings: Lemala Camps and Lodges, Adrift and now Tulia - each serving different traveller needs across safari and adventure experiences.

As part of the acquisition, three established Uganda properties - now rebranded as Tulia Buhoma, Tulia Ishasha and Tulia Murchison Falls - join Tulia Amboseli in Kenya to form a four-property portfolio spanning some of East Africa's most sought-after wildlife regions.

A clear gap in the market

Tulia has been developed in response to sustained demand from travel advisors and guests for a safari experience that sits between budget and high-end luxury.

While Lemala focuses on refined, boutique safari experiences, Tulia is built around a simpler promise: delivering the essentials of a great safari, done well.

"At its core, Tulia is about getting the fundamentals right," says Moseketsi Mpeta, CEO of Tourvest Accommodation. "Guests want to be in the right place, with knowledgeable guides and to be comfortable at the end of the day. That's what we focus on - without unnecessary frills, but without compromising on quality."

Building on proven foundations

The Tulia model builds on an established base. Tulia Amboseli in Kenya has already demonstrated strong demand for a value-led safari product that maintains high operational standards.

The integration of the former Wild Frontiers Uganda properties brings experienced teams, well-positioned camps and deep local expertise into the portfolio - ensuring continuity while strengthening the brand's footprint in key ecosystems.

The three Uganda properties are located in some of the country's most iconic wildlife areas:

- Buhoma, in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, known for gorilla trekking
- Ishasha, within Queen Elizabeth National Park, home to tree-climbing lions
- Murchison Falls, near one of East Africa's most dramatic natural landmarks



Responsible growth, practical approach

A central element of Tulia's strategy is to grow through acquiring and enhancing existing properties rather than developing new camps in sensitive environments. This approach reduces environmental impact, avoids unnecessary expansion in already pressured ecosystems, and directs investment toward improving operations, staff development, and guest experience.

"We see this as a more responsible way to grow," Mpeta adds. "It allows us to invest where it matters most - in people, in service, and in the overall guest experience."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SEYCHELLES WELCOMES AIR TANZANIA DIRECT FLIGHTS

Seychelles this month officially welcomed Air Tanzania's inaugural flight from Dar es Salaam, marking the introduction of a new direct air link between the two destinations. The service, operating multiple times a week, is expected to enhance travel convenience and strengthen tourism flows between East Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

It also reflects broader efforts to improve intra-African connectivity, reducing reliance on indirect routes and positioning the region as a more integrated tourism network.

The arrival in the Seychelles of the inaugural

Air Tanzania Airbus A220 flight was greeted with a traditional water-cannon salute and a ribbon-cutting ceremony where David Bianchi, Principal Secretary for Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine in the Seychelles, welcomed Air Tanzania into the growing network of airline partners.

"The introduction of this service between Dar es Salaam and Seychelles marks another significant step in enhancing regional connectivity within Africa and across the Indian Ocean. It reinforces our commitment to supporting greater mobility for air passengers and fostering deeper cultural, economic, tourism and trade exchanges," PS Bianchi said.

Addressing the ceremony, Minister for Transport of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Professor Makame Mbarawa said that this new route is a symbol of progress, strategic cooperation, shared vision and a renewal of aspiration between Tanzania and Seychelles where it builds a vital bridge connecting market, people-to-people links and economic opportunities.

Furthermore, he stated that it provides a unique opportunity to show the tourism treasures and vibrant cultures from both nations.

"This is a clear testament that air transport is a

key driver of modern economic development. The direct link connections will bring significant benefits including reducing travel time and lower cost between Tanzania and Seychelles. Secondly, it will improve convenience for people and business travellers," said Professor Mbarawa.

Air Tanzania will operate three flights a week, on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, arriving in Seychelles at 6.15 am and departing for Dar es Salaam at 7.15 am (local times), enhancing travel efficiency and deepening economic, tourism, and cultural ties between the two countries.

EAST VS SOUTHERN AFRICA: WHICH SAFARI FITS WHICH TRAVELLER?

Each region offers a distinct safari philosophy shaped by landscape, conservation models, and traveller expectations, writes Harriet Akinyi.

For decades, the question of where to go on safari has divided travellers into two camps: East Africa or Southern Africa. But as Africa's tourism industry evolves and travellers become more intentional about how and why they travel, the conversation is shifting from which is better to which is better for you.

From the sweeping plains of the Maasai Mara National Reserve and Serengeti National Park to the water-laced wilderness of the Okavango Delta and the structured game drives of Kruger National Park, each region offers a distinct safari philosophy shaped by landscape, conservation models, and traveller expectations.

East Africa: Where the Wild Feels Cinematic

East Africa has long defined the classic safari. It is here that travellers encounter vast, open ecosystems where wildlife moves freely across borders and horizons seem endless.

For those seeking raw wilderness, iconic landscapes, and a sense of being part of a larger ecological drama, East Africa delivers.

It is ideal for photographers, first-time safari-goers chasing the "Out of Africa" dream, and travellers drawn to large-scale wildlife events. The region's biggest draw remains the Great Wildebeest Migration, often described as one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on Earth.

In Kenya and Tanzania, safaris are immersive and often dramatic. River crossings in the Mara, predator-prey interactions in the Serengeti, and the dense wildlife populations of the Ngorongoro Crater create a sense of scale and intensity that is hard to replicate elsewhere.

"East Africa is about storytelling," says Joshat Malombe CEO Phil Travel Safaris. "You are not just seeing animals but witnessing a narrative unfold."

The region also offers strong cultural dimensions. Encounters with Maasai, Samburu, and other communities are often integrated into itineraries, adding depth to the wildlife experience.

However, during peak migration months, certain areas like the Mara can feel crowded.



But this presents an opportunity for travelers to explore other least visited parks like Tsavo, Amboseli, Samburu and Ruma national park.

Southern Africa: Intimate, Diverse, and Designed

In contrast, Southern Africa offers a more controlled and varied safari experience. Countries like Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have built tourism models that prioritize exclusivity, infrastructure, and diversity of activities.

In Botswana's Okavango Delta, safaris unfold on water as much as on land. Travellers glide silently in mokoros (dugout canoes), encountering wildlife from a unique vantage point. In South Africa's Kruger ecosystem, a network of private reserves allows for off-road driving, night safaris, and closer wildlife encounters.

"Southern Africa is about access and comfort," says Bainito Musumba from Private Safaris. "You get closer to the wildlife, and the

overall experience is often more curated."

The region is also known for combining safari with other attractions. Visitors can pair wildlife experiences with visits to Victoria Falls, wine tourism in the Cape, or urban exploration in Cape Town.

For first-time travellers, particularly families or those seeking self-drive options, South Africa offers a more accessible entry point into safari travel.

With that in mind, travellers should know that as African tourism continues to diversify, the binary between East and Southern Africa is becoming less rigid.

Increasingly, high-end travellers are combining both regions into a single itinerary, tracking the migration in East Africa before heading south for water-based safaris or luxury retreats. Ultimately, the choice between East and Southern Africa depends on the kind of traveller you are.



SAFARI TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS: WHO IS TRAVELLING, SPENDING, AND SHAPING AFRICA'S SAFARI FUTURE

According to safari market insights compiled by Go2Africa, 2025 continues to show strong and concentrated demand for Africa's most established safari destinations.

South Africa remains the leading safari destination, accounting for 24% of all enquiries. Kenya follows with 21%, while Tanzania records 19%. Together, these three countries represent 64% of total safari interest, an increase from around 60% in both 2023 and 2024.

This +4% rise highlights the continued dominance of Southern and East Africa's core safari markets and the growing confidence travellers place in destinations with strong wildlife diversity and well-developed tourism infrastructure.

Within this broader pattern, several important shifts stand out. Botswana is the most notable riser, increasing its share of enquiries from 7% in 2024

to 12% in 2025. This marks a significant jump above its recent average and reflects growing global interest in exclusive, high-end wildlife experiences.

Kenya also saw strong growth, rising by 3% from 18% in 2024 and overtaking Tanzania to become the second most popular safari destination in 2025. Tanzania, while still a key player, experienced more modest growth. South Africa, meanwhile, continues its steady upward trend, reinforcing its position as the continent's most accessible and versatile safari hub.

At the same time, some destinations saw declines. Zimbabwe recorded the largest drop (-3%), followed by Seychelles (-2%), Namibia (-2%), and Rwanda (-1%). The softening demand for Indian Ocean island destinations suggests a market correction after strong post-

pandemic interest in beach-based travel. Broader tourism research from the World Travel & Tourism Council, UN Tourism, Kenya Tourism Board, South African Tourism, and Botswana Tourism Organisation shows that safari demand has steadily increased since 2023. Travellers are increasingly seeking immersive, conservation-led, and experience-driven tourism across East and Southern Africa.

Key source markets remain the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and France, while China and India are emerging as fast-growing outbound markets. Intra-African travel is also becoming more important, especially from South Africa and neighboring countries.

Pricing data highlights the diversity of safari experiences. In East Africa, mid-range safaris typically cost between \$350 and \$800 per person per day, while luxury migration-focused experiences can exceed \$1,500 per night. Southern Africa, particularly Botswana, remains one of the most expensive safari regions due to its "high-value, low-volume"

tourism model, with luxury fly-in safaris ranging from \$1,500 to over \$4,000 per day. Reports from Go2Africa, show that travellers are shifting toward experiential tourism. Travellers are increasingly seeking walking safaris, cultural interactions, stargazing, conservation participation, and slow travel itineraries rather than traditional game drives alone.

Multi-destination safaris are also rising, with popular combinations including Kenya-Tanzania migration routes, Botswana-South Africa luxury circuits, and Rwanda or Uganda paired with classic safari itineraries for gorilla trekking.

Sustainability is now central to safari development. Botswana continues to emphasise conservation and limited visitor numbers, while Kenya promotes conservancies and community-based tourism.

Overall, Africa's safari future is increasingly shaped by the balance between conservation, community benefit, and high-quality visitor experiences.



THE CLUB MED EFFECT: WHEN GLOBAL TOURISM CAPITAL MEETS A HIGH-GROWTH COASTAL MARKET

One of the world's most recognised hospitality brands is planting a flag in South African soil for the first time, and the ripple effects will be felt for decades, writes Stefan Botha, Director of Rainmaker Marketing



On 4 July 2026, a resort opens on KZN's North Coast. That sentence alone doesn't do it justice. What is actually happening is that one of the world's most recognised hospitality brands is planting a flag in South African soil for the first time, and if history is anything to go by, the ripple effects will be felt for decades.

Club Med Tinley is not just a hotel. It is a R2 billion anchor investment comprising 486 keys, a 500-pax convention centre, an 18,000-hectare Big 5 game reserve with its own safari lodge, and the world's first Club Med to combine beach and bush in a single guest journey. There is no comparable product anywhere in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, or Southeast Asia. This is a structural first in Club Med's 75-year history. And it is happening here.

Here's the thing. Club Med has done this before. Not once. Repeatedly.

In 1976, Cancun was a fishing village with roughly 120 residents and zero hotels. Club Med was among the first operators to break ground. Private investors had been reluctant to commit to an unknown stretch of sand in one of Mexico's poorest regions. Club Med's arrival gave the market permission to believe. Today, Cancun welcomes 21 million tourists a year and generates over \$20 billion in annual tourism revenue for the state of Quintana Roo. The city that didn't exist 55 years ago now produces a third of Mexico's total tourism income.

In Ibiza, Club Med arrived when the island was still a farming and fishing community. Tourism now accounts for an estimated 90% of the island's GDP. In the Dominican Republic, Club Med pioneered Punta Cana before it became one of the Caribbean's most visited destinations, and more recently opened in Miches, a rural area that is now attracting hundreds of millions of dollars in secondary investment.

A Global Blueprint for Regional Transformation

The pattern is consistent. Club Med enters undeveloped regions with natural assets but no tourism infrastructure. The brand brings international credibility. Other investors follow. Roads get built. Airlines add routes. Employment shifts from subsistence to services. Property values get permanently repriced.

That repricing is already visible on the North Coast. The Club Med Exclusive Collection villas at Tinley have now reached approximately R12 million for a family suite, driven purely by demand and scarcity. With only 64 units released, the market has done the pricing. At roughly R73,000 per square metre, these villas are trading at nearly three times the rate of the very best sectional title product within estates on the North Coast corridor, where the high end is achieving around R30,000 per square metre.

That gap is not a distortion. It is a signal.

Consider the market this resort is landing



into. In 2025, the Ballito, Salt Rock, and KwaDukuza North Urban corridor recorded a combined 929 residential transfers worth over R3.2 billion. Average freehold prices are sitting at R4.8 million in Ballito and over R7 million in Salt Rock. The broader KwaDukuza North Urban node saw population growth of 301% between 2011 and 2025, with 173 adults and 115 families arriving every single month. Household income growth across the North Coast corridor has been staggering, with Ballito up 112%, Salt Rock up 273%, and KwaDukuza North Urban up 215% over the same period.

This is not a sleepy coastal strip waiting for something to happen. The fundamentals were already moving. Club Med is the accelerant.

The North Coast's Inflection Point

What the data actually shows us is that the North Coast has been quietly assembling the ingredients of a world-class lifestyle corridor. Population density is building. Income profiles are strengthening. Estate premiums are hardening, with sectional title properties inside estates commanding 38% more in Ballito and 56% more in Salt Rock compared to non-estate equivalents. Capital appreciation on

sectional title stock is running between 5% and 23% annually across the key nodes.

Now add 175,963 annual room nights of international tourism. Add the airline routes that will follow a Club Med opening, as they always do. Add a 500-seat convention centre that positions the North Coast as a MICE destination for the first time. Add 800 direct jobs and 1,500 indirect jobs, pumping wages into the local economy.

If you're a developer sitting with land on the North Coast, the question is no longer whether a premium product can work here. The question is how quickly the broader market recalibrates upward as the international spotlight lands.

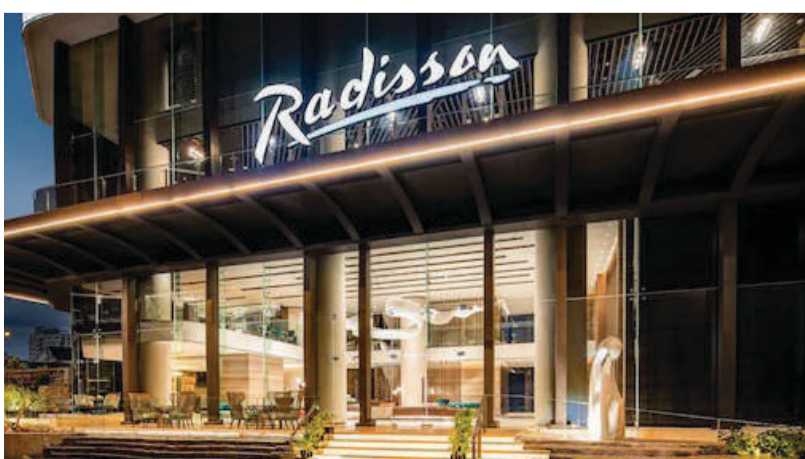
If you're an investor, consider this: every market Club Med has entered has seen sustained, long-term property value appreciation in the surrounding area. This isn't speculation. It's arithmetic, and it has a 75-year track record.

The Club Med Effect is not about one resort. It is about what one catalytic project does to an entire region's trajectory. Cancun proved it. Punta Cana proved it. The North Coast is next.

RADISSON HOTEL GROUP SURPASSES 100 HOTELS IN AFRICA

Radisson Hotel Group has reached a significant milestone in Africa, with more than 100 hotels across the continent in operation and under development.

Radisson Blu continues to anchor the legacy footprint. At the same time, the Radisson brand is the fastest riser, supported by a strong conversion engine and a concrete pipeline that continues to translate into openings.



Building on this momentum, the Group has signed over 15 new hotels and roughly 2,500 rooms in the last 12 months, including new market entries in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe.

Over the past five years, Radisson and Radisson Blu have ranked among the most signed brands in Africa, with one of the highest shares of cumulative openings. The last 12 months set a

new benchmark with more than 2,500 rooms signed and multiple market entries.

Priority growth markets remain Morocco, South Africa, and Nigeria, where the Group is deepening its presence and widening its brand distribution.

Elie Younes, Executive Vice President & Global Chief Development Officer, Radisson Hotel Group, commented: "We've crossed the 100-hotels mark in Africa by staying true to our values, executing our plan, and delivering compelling results to owners while moving fast on quality conversions. The next phase evolves into a geographic focus in Morocco and Nigeria and strengthens our presence in South Africa with a concrete pipeline under construction. The trust of our owners, the momentum of our journey, and the expertise of our regional leadership will drive resilience and unlock opportunities."

Nigeria shows the model's resilience. The Group now holds a strong position in the country with 13 hotels in operation and pipeline, while Abuja is carrying a significant active pipeline with three hotels totaling 458 keys.

South Africa is being reshaped with priorities in Cape Town, targeted growth in secondary cities such as Durban and Pretoria, and a sharper focus on leisure corridors that include Kruger National Park, Sun City, and the Garden Route. The

Group plans to enter Zanzibar and is considering lodge, safari, and affiliation opportunities across Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia to meet the rising demand for nature-led experiences.

Conversions remain a core lever for scale and speed. In the last five years, more than 15 hotels, equal to almost 3,000 rooms, joined the portfolio through conversion. This helped the Group lead openings across the continent while keeping brand standards high and owners in mind.

Recent signings show the extensiveness of this strategy, with a balanced pipeline of city hotels, resort destinations, and quick-to-market conversions. Signings include Radisson Blu Kinshasa and three Radisson hotels in Lubumbashi, all in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Radisson Collection Lagos Atlantic in Nigeria; Radisson Harare and Park Inn Victoria Falls, both in Zimbabwe; and Radisson Blu Resort & Conference Center, Casablanca Bouskoura, and a first Radisson hotel in Rabat, both in Morocco. Further expansion is also planned in Marrakech.

TIKTOK IS REWRITING THE RULES OF DESTINATION MARKETING

A 20-second video can do what a multimillion-dollar campaign once struggled to achieve, writes Bulut Bağcı, President of World Tourism Forum Institute

For decades, tourism boards sold destinations through glossy campaigns, cinematic television spots, billboards, travel fairs and carefully staged press trips. The message was controlled, the visuals were polished, and the audience was expected to admire the destination from a distance.

TikTok has changed that logic almost completely.

Today, a destination does not need to wait for a global advertising campaign to become visible. A beach, a street-food market, a mountain village, a local festival, a hidden café, or even a train journey can become a global travel trigger overnight. A 20-second video can do what a multimillion-dollar campaign once struggled to achieve: make people feel that they must go there.

This is the new power of TikTok in tourism. It is not simply a social media platform. It has become a destination discovery engine, a travel search tool, a creator economy marketplace, and an emotional bridge between places and future visitors.

From Inspiration To Intention

Tourism has always been built on imagination. Before people book a flight, they first imagine themselves in a place. They imagine the view, the food, the people, the rhythm, the atmosphere. TikTok accelerates this process because it turns destination promotion into lived experience.

Unlike traditional tourism advertising, TikTok does not usually present a destination as a perfect postcard. It presents it as a moment. A person walking through a night market. A traveler discovering a hidden beach. A local guide explaining where to eat. A creator filming a sunrise from a mountain road. These short, informal and first-person videos make the viewer feel close to the destination.

That closeness matters. Travel decisions are emotional before they are commercial. TikTok gives destinations the ability to convert emotion into curiosity, curiosity into search, and search into planning.

The New Tourism Influencer Is Not Always A Celebrity

One of the most important lessons for destination managers is that TikTok influence does not always come from famous names. In many cases, local creators, residents, guides, chefs, artists, students and ordinary travelers can be more powerful than celebrities.

Why? Because authenticity has become the new currency of tourism marketing.

A destination video works when it feels believable. The viewer must feel: "This is real. I can go there. I can experience this." Overproduced promotional films may still have value for branding, but TikTok rewards content that feels immediate, human and native to the platform.

For tourism boards, this means creator strategy should not be based only on follower numbers. The better question is: does this creator fit the destination? A food creator can sell a city through its restaurants. An adventure creator can reposition a mountain region. A local historian can bring cultural heritage to life. A family creator can make a destination feel safe and accessible.

In the TikTok era, the messenger is part of the destination brand.

The Platform's Commercial Power

The strongest destination campaigns on TikTok show that the platform can deliver much more than views.

The lesson is clear: TikTok works best when it is not treated as a random posting channel. It must be treated as a full-funnel tourism system.

At the top of the funnel, TikTok creates awareness. In the middle, it builds desire through creators, comments, saves and shares. At the bottom, it can drive traffic to itinerary pages, hotel partners, attractions, event pages and booking platforms.

The mistake many destinations make is stopping at views. Views are useful, but they are not enough. The real question is whether TikTok activity increases destination searches, website visits, itinerary downloads, hotel interest, partner referrals, bookings, arrivals and visitor spending.

TikTok Is Becoming A Travel Search Engine

One of the biggest shifts is that younger travellers increasingly use TikTok not only to be entertained, but to search.

They search for "best places to visit," "hidden gems," "things to do," "where to eat," "3 days in Istanbul," "Maldives budget trip," or "what to do in Riyadh." This search behaviour is extremely important for destinations because it means TikTok is no longer only an inspiration platform. It is becoming part of the planning process.

For destination marketing organisations, this creates a new responsibility. Content must be beautiful, but it must also be useful. A strong TikTok tourism strategy should include practical videos: how to arrive, where to stay, what to eat, what to avoid, when to visit, how much things cost, and what can be done in 24, 48 or 72 hours.

In modern tourism, inspiration without planning support is a missed opportunity.

The Algorithm Rewards Emotion, Relevance And Speed

TikTok's power comes from its recommendation system. A destination does not need millions of followers to be discovered. If the content performs well, it can travel far beyond the existing audience.

This is a major opportunity for emerging destinations. Countries, cities and regions that cannot compete with the advertising budgets

of global tourism giants can still compete creatively. A small destination with strong storytelling can reach international audiences if it understands the platform's language.

That language is fast, emotional and participatory. The first seconds matter. The story must be clear. The video must feel native. The content should invite saving, sharing, commenting or recreating.

For destinations, this means the creative question has changed. It is no longer only: "What do we want to say about our country?" It is also: "What would make someone stop scrolling?"

What Destinations Should Do Now

Tourism boards should build TikTok into their national and city-level promotion strategies, but with discipline. The platform should not be managed as a side activity by simply posting beautiful videos. It requires editorial planning, creator partnerships, data analysis and conversion measurement.

A strong destination TikTok strategy should include five elements.

First, destinations need authentic storytelling. Real people, real experiences and real places should be at the center.

Second, they need creator ecosystems. Local and international creators should be organized around themes such as gastronomy, culture, luxury, nature, events, shopping, sports and family travel.

Third, they need search-focused content. Videos should answer the questions travelers are already asking.

Fourth, they need conversion pathways. Every major campaign should connect to websites, itineraries, partner offers, hotel platforms or event pages.

Fifth, they need measurement beyond vanity metrics. Views, likes and shares matter, but economic impact matters more.

The Bottom Line

TikTok has become one of the most powerful tourism promotion tools of the decade because it changes how people discover places. It gives destinations the ability to become personal, emotional and immediate. It allows small places to compete with global brands. It turns visitors into media channels. It transforms local experiences into international demand.

But the real winners will not be the destinations that simply go viral. The winners will be the destinations that convert visibility into strategy, strategy into visitation, and visitation into sustainable economic value.

Tourism promotion is no longer only about showing the world a destination.

It is about making the world feel that the destination is already part of their next journey.



WHAT'S ON

TikTok Masterclass: From Bucket list to Booking

The Power of Content Creation in Destination Marketing

Presented by Zethu Mthethwa, Partnerships Lead for Mid Market, Digital Natives and Retail, TikTok Global Business Solutions

Venue: Stream 2, Room 12, Durban ICC

Time: 11 May 2026, 11.25

Travel discovery has fundamentally shifted. TikTok has become the platform where destinations are found, validated, and shared, influencing not just where people go, but how they feel about a place before they even arrive.

This masterclass moves beyond inspiration to application. Zethu Mthethwa equips brands with the frameworks and tools to turn cultural moments into real-world visitation - showing how creators, content systems, and smart ad solutions work together across the full funnel to build community and drive meaningful demand.

SADC SECRETARIAT, BOUNDLESS SOUTHERN AFRICA AND TOURISM ALLIANCE TO HOST HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AT INDABA

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, Boundless Southern Africa, and the Southern Africa Tourism Alliance will convene a high-level side event at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, bringing together government officials and private sector leaders to accelerate solutions that will transform regional connectivity and unlock tourism growth across Southern Africa.

The event, titled "Unlocking Regional Connectivity: Rethinking How Southern Africa Moves Its Visitors," will take place on 13 May 2026. Supported by the Department of Tourism, Republic of South Africa, and co-funded by the German Government and the European Union (EU), the dialogue is implemented by the SADC Secretariat through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Dynamic, solution-driven dialogue

Southern Africa's tourism potential is vast and compelling, offering diverse experiences across its 16 Member States. Yet fragmented travel, limited air routes, varying visa requirements, and border inefficiencies have slowed progress. The SADC Tourism Programme 2020–2030 identifies

connectivity as the foundation for growth, and this event is designed to move beyond reporting progress into dynamic, solution-driven dialogue.

By uniting policymakers and private sector leaders, the session will focus on practical strategies to position Southern Africa as a seamless, multi-country destination that is easy to explore and attractive to global travellers.

The two-hour programme will open with a structured update on the SADC Tourism Programme, highlighting progress on the Univisa assessment, regional air access studies, Transfrontier Conservation Area development, and border efficiency initiatives.

A government panel of Directors General and senior officials will then explore visa policy, air services agreements, and border management frameworks. This will be followed by a private sector panel where industry leaders will challenge assumptions and propose commercially viable solutions.

Regional connectivity

Confirmed panellists include Mr Aaron Munetsi, CEO of the Airlines Association of Southern

Africa; Ms Dimakatso Malwela of Women of Value Southern Africa (WOVSA); Ms Jillian Blackbeard of Africa's Eden; Mr Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, CEO of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and Chair of the Southern Africa Tourism Alliance. Audience members will be able to participate in real time through a digital platform. Both panels will be moderated by Ms Natalia Rosa of the Southern Africa Tourism Alliance.

Ms Angele Makombo N'tumba, Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration at the SADC Secretariat, emphasised: "Regional connectivity is the foundation on which the entire SADC Tourism Programme rests. This side event provides an important platform for government and private sector to engage directly on the realities of moving visitors across our region, and to identify where we can accelerate progress together."

Ms Natalia Rosa of the Southern Africa Tourism Alliance added: "The private sector experiences the consequences of connectivity gaps every day, in lost bookings, itineraries that cannot be built, and visitors who choose other regions because Southern Africa is too

complicated to navigate. This event is our opportunity to bring that commercial reality into direct conversation with policymakers. We are not here to report on progress. We are here to challenge each other on pace."

The event is open to private sector CEOs and senior executives, national tourism association leaders, SADC Secretariat officials, Tourism Working Group members, airline and aviation stakeholders, civil aviation authorities, border management and immigration officials, development finance and investment representatives, development partners and tourism media.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ms Barbara Lopi, Head of Communication and Public Relations, SADC Secretariat – Email: blopi@sadc.int and cc: prinfo@sadc.int or Ms Marygoreth Mushi, Programme Officer for Policy and Market Development – Email: mmushi@sadc.int and cc: prinfo@sadc.int or Ms Natalia Rosa, Project Lead, Southern Africa Tourism Alliance – Tel: (+27) 83 449 4334, Email: natalia.rosa@thenbf.co.za

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 8TH ANNUAL AFRICA TOURISM LEADERSHIP FORUM (ATLF) AWARDS

Nominations are officially open for the 8th Africa Tourism Leadership Awards, the premier pan-African honours dedicated to celebrating the visionaries and innovations driving our continent's travel, hospitality, and aviation sectors.

This year's ceremony will be a centerpiece of the 8th Africa Tourism Leadership Forum, hosted in the vibrant city of Polokwane within Limpopo, South Africa's northernmost province. Located just a one-hour flight from Johannesburg, the event will take place from 2-4 September 2026.

With self-nominations and peer recommendations welcomed, this year's categories cover the full spectrum of the industry, recognising excellence in Progressive Policies, Outstanding Entrepreneurship, Africa Tourism Media and Marketing, and Women in Leadership.

ATLF are also seeking entries for the Championing Sustainability Award, the Most Innovative Business Tourism Destination Award, and honours for Outstanding Accommodation Facilities, Tourism Transportation, and the prestigious Destination Africa Lifetime Award.

The winners of the 2026 awards will be officially announced during the 8th Africa Tourism Leadership Forum, hosted by the Limpopo Tourism Organisation under the patronage of the Africa Tourism Partners and its Pan-African stakeholders.

As a premier gathering of industry thought leaders, the ATLF remains dedicated to advancing entrepreneurship, fostering women and youth empowerment, and celebrating the

continent's most impactful change-makers.

This forum serves as a vital platform for African tourism leaders to engage in advocacy, share transformative experiences, and collaborate on the firm, implementable actions necessary to stimulate intra-Africa travel growth and long-term development.

Hosting the 2026 Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) & Awards marks a significant milestone for Limpopo. The event will unite policymakers and industry leaders to improve accessibility and strengthen intra-African travel, ensuring Limpopo remains central to the continent's tourism growth.

Hon. Tshitereke Matibe, MEC for LEDET (Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism), has articulated a clear ambition for the province to claim the top spot in national tourism rankings. He noted that while Limpopo currently holds the second-place position, its performance as an inland destination effectively makes it the national leader in its category. The MEC emphasized that the province is no longer content with second place and is strategically positioned to officially become number one.

All African travel and tourism stakeholders, media partners, and industry leaders are cordially invited to join the 2026 Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) & Awards in Limpopo. Participation in the event provides an opportunity to engage with Pan-African tourism thought leaders, policy makers, travel trade representatives, destination management companies, and other industry professionals.



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UN TOURISM MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

Women across Africa are being offered a new pathway into tourism leadership through a six-month mentorship programme implemented by UN Tourism with the support of the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC).

Designed to foster leadership, encourage entrepreneurship and support professional growth, the programme is open to women of all ages and professional backgrounds. Applications are particularly encouraged from young talent, emerging leaders, mid-career professionals, entrepreneurs and

women living in rural communities.

The programme focuses on advancing:

1. Leadership development, supporting women to step into senior roles within the tourism sector
2. Entrepreneurial support, helping women launch or grow tourism related businesses and strengthen management capabilities
3. Technological innovation and integration, encouraging the adoption and effective use of digital tools and platforms

4. Personal and professional growth, promoting skills development, education and career advancement

5. Advocacy and representation, strengthening women's voice in tourism policy and industry practices

Selection Criteria

Applicants must be currently working in, studying, or aspiring to build a career in the tourism sector in Africa (e.g. travel, hospitality, heritage, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, academia, event planning). They should also

demonstrate an interest in advancing tourism for development in Africa. Finally, they should be open to feedback and willing to commit to a professional mentor-mentee relationship.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate citizenship of one of the 51 UN Tourism African Member States (refer to the full list). The programme encourages inclusivity and diversity from all sub-regions and countries.

Find out more at www.untourism.int/africa

DESIGNING DIGNITY INTO THE DETAILS: FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS IN ITINERARY PLANNING

The Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism convened stakeholders to interrogate what a “good” itinerary looks like for the people who deliver it.

At 3am, when most people are experiencing deep REM sleep, some tour guides are already on the road. By 12pm, they have already navigated both vehicular and natural traffic, fielded a thousand questions, and dealt with a couple of impromptu scenarios. At 11pm, they are still smiling around the campfire, preparing to do it all tomorrow again. This is the reality of cramming early mornings, ambitious routes, and extraordinary experiences into tight tourism schedules, driven by shorter travel windows, budget constraints, and increasingly competitive international markets.

Earlier this year the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, together with Fair Trade Tourism

(FTT) and the Southern African Tourism Services Associations (SATSA), convened stakeholders from across South Africa and Europe’s tourism industries to interrogate what a “good” itinerary looks like for the people who deliver it.

Moderator Rachel Nxele noted that “fair working conditions in the tourism industry need to go beyond the vehicles and lodges. It starts in the planning phase.” She emphasised that “decisions taken during itinerary design directly shape the daily realities of these frontline workers’ operating hours, rest, safety, dignity, and more.

When maps don’t match reality

Whether it is a five-hour transfer that looks

short on a map, a township tour compressed into an hour, or a safari guest disappointed not to see a leopard, misaligned expectations can have dire consequences on staff. “Operators expect guides to make miracles happen in an hour. One of our guides relates it to walking through the zoo, which erodes value for visitors, too,” an attendee expressed. “So it’s always a bit of a balancing act between what the customer wants and what’s actually plausible.”

Another attendee reminded the room that: “Nature doesn’t run on a clock. You’re not coming to a space where the animals are sitting waiting for you. It’s their turf, their playground. You have to wait for them. It’s all about the timing, the animals, the weather conditions, the noise, and so many other factors that we have to consider.”

Additionally, South Africa’s distances are significant, and what might appear on a map as a modest transfer can translate into five or six hours on the road. Add unpredictable traffic, safety considerations, and activities running late, and the cumulative effect can erode rest periods for staff. And while the Department of Transport has put legislated limits on driving distances and hours (having two drivers if the destination is over 800km away, providing sleeping arrangements for overnight trips, not driving for longer than 12 hours at a time, overtime pay, etc.), these are not always incorporated into itineraries.

Attendees agreed that decision-makers shouldn’t make decisions over the local community and people who are affected by the outcomes. “We need to involve them in the planning and put more effort into co-creation,” Fair Trade Tourism Board Member

Lisa Scriven pointed out. “If you’re creating this itinerary jointly, you’ve got the realities from the ground and the expectations from the guests kind of around one table before the time, like ahead of time. When it comes back to communicating and whose responsibility it is, everybody’s on the same page in terms of the understanding around how we’re going to handle it so that it doesn’t roll down to the person at the bottom of the totem pole.”

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The workshop identified immediate actions that can make a difference:

- Build realistic travel times and rest periods into itineraries from the outset, accounting for South Africa’s significant distances and unpredictable conditions.
- Provide accessible accommodation for late- or overnight drivers.
- Ensure meal allowances align with actual dining costs so staff can maintain dignity.
- Conduct on-site briefings rather than relying solely on pre-travel documentation.
- Educate international partners about local transport realities and labour contexts.
- Encourage staff to speak up when plans compromise safety or wellbeing.
- Adopt language that reflects respect.
- Connect regularly between operators and ground staff to discuss challenges.
- Work with forums and associations to stay informed about human rights regulations and legislation.



ECOTRAINING’S NEWEST ONLINE COURSE GIVES A RARE GLIMPSE INTO THE SECRET LIVES OF LIONS

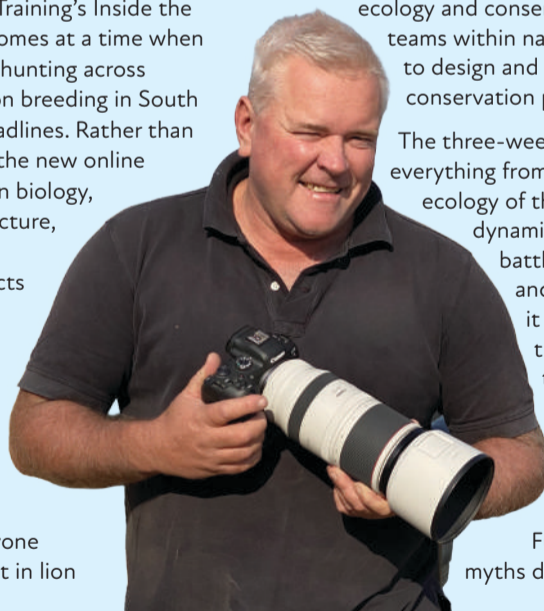
Ask Dr Paul Funston what a thriving lion population looks like, and he gives you a simple metric: the average number of adult females per pride. That number, he says, should be four. A single figure that tells a scientist almost everything they need to know about how a lion population is functioning.

“If I went into an area and the data showed that the average number of adult lionesses per pride was four, I would immediately know that the population of lions is in its best possible state,” he explains. “If, on the other hand, the average was two adult females, I’d know that there is high adult female mortality, and high cub mortality – and those two things are most likely being driven by humans.”

Here, he’s referring to poaching. The biggest threat facing lions today.

Education is key. EcoTraining’s Inside the Pride online course comes at a time when poaching and trophy hunting across Africa, and captive lion breeding in South Africa, are making headlines. Rather than fanning controversy, the new online course focuses on lion biology, behaviour, social structure, communication and conservation – subjects Funston has studied for the better part of his 30-year career.

It is the perfect course for field guides, conservation students, wildlife professionals and anyone with a serious interest in lion



ecology and conservation – including teams within national parks looking to design and implement scalable conservation programmes.

The three-week course covers everything from the evolution and ecology of the lion to pride dynamics, coalitions, territorial battles, survival strategies and more. Importantly, it also covers current threats to lions and the conservation responses required.”

It is a fascinating journey into the heart of the pride alongside Funston, with many myths debunked along the way.

“What I’d love is for people to leave this course able to communicate about lions with confidence,” says Funston.

“To correct the misconceptions that still exist – and to convey, clearly, what is required when it comes to protecting Africa’s lions.”

The team at EcoTraining believe this course hands wilderness guides something no guidebook ever could. It offers the kind of deep, nuanced understanding of lion society that transforms how you see every pride you encounter in the bush, and how you speak about them with conviction.

Are you interested in lion conservation?

To join the next cohort for Inside the Pride, contact EcoTraining at enquiries@ecotraining.co.za.

NEW UNIVERSAL ACCESS WALKWAY AT TABLE MOUNTAIN SUMMIT ENHANCES INCLUSIVITY

High above Cape Town, where sweeping views meet one of South Africa’s most beloved natural landmarks, a meaningful step forward in accessibility has taken shape. At Table Mountain, a new universal access pathway at the summit is opening the experience to more visitors than ever before.

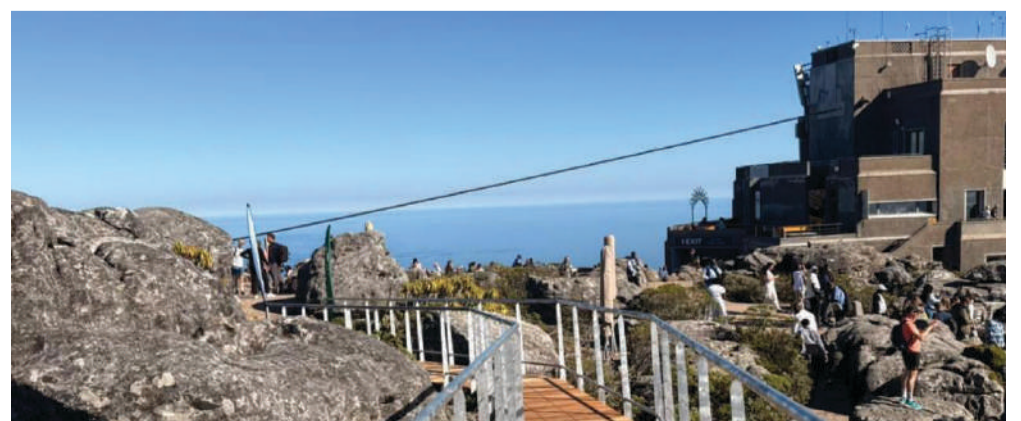
Developed in partnership with South African National Parks, this initiative reflects a shared vision: making iconic spaces more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to all.

The newly introduced pathway has been thoughtfully designed to accommodate

wheelchair users, visitors with prams, and anyone facing mobility challenges – ensuring that the summit can be explored safely and comfortably.

This is not just an infrastructure upgrade; it is a statement about the future of tourism. By embracing principles of universal design, the project highlights how natural heritage sites can evolve to serve a broader and more diverse community of visitors.

It is about dignity, independence, and the simple joy of being able to experience a place like Table Mountain without barriers.



ROAD TRIPPIN' TO DURBAN: A JOURNEY TO AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

There are road trips... and then there are South African road trips, the kind where every few hours feels like a new country, a new culture, and a new reason to pull over "just quickly" (which is never quick).

As the continent gears up for Africa's Travel Indaba, one of the largest tourism marketing events on the African calendar, South African Tourism staff journeyed from Johannesburg to host city Durban to take in the sights and tastes.

More than just a drive, this roadtrip was a living showcase of what makes South Africa a world-class, diverse, and deeply immersive destination.

Day 1: Trading Highways for Highlands

Leaving Johannesburg at sunrise hits differently. The city fades, the traffic thins, and suddenly it's just you, the open road, and a playlist that somehow feels more profound than usual.

By mid-morning, you roll into Clarens, affectionately known as the "Jewel of the Free State." Think art galleries, mountain backdrops, and the kind of crisp air that makes you



question all your life choices in the best way.

Lunch is unhurried, the streets are lined with creativity, and a little adrenaline at Clarens Xtreme whether it's quad biking or ziplining sets the tone for what this trip really is: a curated experience of South Africa's hidden gems.

By dinner, you're no longer just "on a trip." You're in it.

Day 2: Culture, Dinosaurs & the Wild Side

The next leg leans into discovery.

First stop: the Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre. Yes, dinosaurs. Because apparently this road trip needed more personality.

Then it's on to the Basotho Cultural Village, where history isn't behind glass it's alive, immersive, and proudly told. It's here that you begin to understand the depth of South Africa's cultural offering a key narrative that platforms like Africa's Travel Indaba bring to the global stage.

Crossing into KwaZulu-Natal, the landscape shifts again and so does the pace. Arrival at Nambiti Game Reserve introduces the wild side of the journey: golden-hour game drives, open landscapes, and a boma dinner under the stars.

Not bad for a "detour."

Day 3: Mountains, Wine & a Little Luxury

An early morning game drive reminds you why South Africa remains one of the most sought-after safari destinations in the world.

From there, the journey climbs into the Drakensberg - dramatic, expansive, and unforgettable. This is the kind of scenery that sells destinations without saying a word.

A stop for wine tasting at Cathedral Peak Wine Estate adds a layer of indulgence, before checking into the Drakensberg Sun Resort, where the pace softens completely. Spa treatments, horseback rides, or simply doing nothing at all this is slow travel at its best.

And it's exactly this diversity from adventure to luxury that Africa's Travel Indaba positions to international markets year after year.



Day 4: Stories, Craft & the Road to the Coast

The final stretch to Durban is intentionally slow. The Midlands Meander offers a tapestry of artisanal experiences, weaving studios, craft shops, and countryside cafés that reflect the richness of local enterprise and creativity. It's a powerful reminder that tourism is not just about places, but about people and livelihoods.

A stop at the Nelson Mandela Capture Site brings reflection. It grounds the journey in history, legacy, and the stories that continue to shape South Africa's identity.

Then, almost imperceptibly, the air changes. Warmer. Coastal. Alive.

Durban awaits.

Durban: Where the Road Meets Opportunity Arriving in Durban, the energy shifts once more.

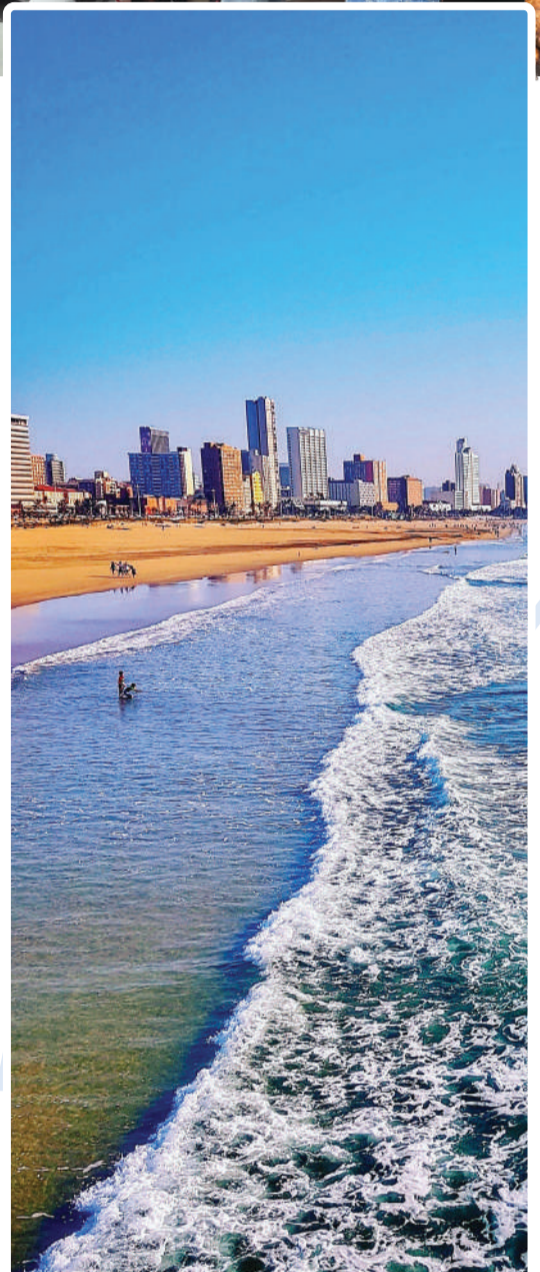
The Indian Ocean stretches endlessly, the city hums with culture, and the atmosphere is unmistakably global. Checking into the beachfront feels like a reward, but it's also the beginning of something bigger.

Because this is where Africa's Travel Indaba comes to life.

For buyers, media, and exhibitors, Indaba is where connections are made, deals are signed, and Africa's tourism future is shaped. For South Africa, it is a moment to showcase not just a destination, but an entire ecosystem from township experiences and heritage routes to luxury safaris and coastal escapes.

And for those who chose the scenic route to get here, the message is clear:

The destination matters. But the journey? That's where the real story lives.



LITTLE INDIA SUGAR & SPICE TOUR SHOWCASES DURBAN'S HERITAGE

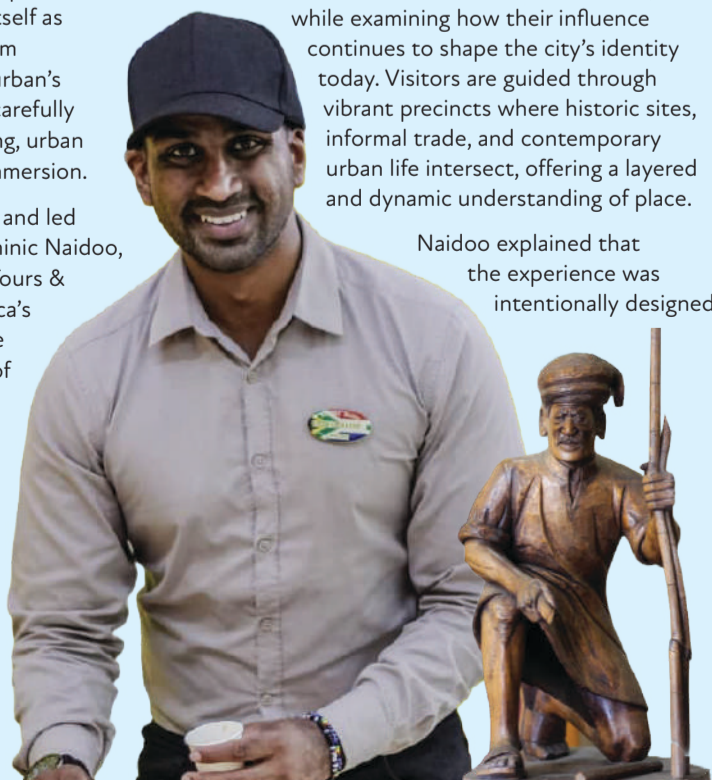
The Little India Sugar & Spice Tour Series has positioned itself as a distinctive cultural tourism experience, showcasing Durban's Indian heritage through a carefully curated blend of storytelling, urban exploration and culinary immersion.

The tour is conceptualised and led by experience curator Dominic Naidoo, whose SMME, Travel Bug Tours & Safaris, is exhibiting at Africa's Travel Indaba as part of the South Africa Department of Tourism's Market Access Support Programme.

Reflecting a broader shift within the tourism sector towards authentic, community-driven experiences, the tour traces the legacy of

Indian indentured labourers and traders, while examining how their influence continues to shape the city's identity today. Visitors are guided through vibrant precincts where historic sites, informal trade, and contemporary urban life intersect, offering a layered and dynamic understanding of place.

Naidoo explained that the experience was intentionally designed



to move beyond conventional sightseeing. "The Little India Sugar & Spice Tour is about connecting people to the real Durban. It's not just about what you see, but what you taste, who you meet and the stories you take with you," he said. This approach places equal emphasis on narrative, interaction and sensory engagement, aligning with global demand for more meaningful travel experiences.

A defining feature of the tour is its strong culinary component. Durban's food culture, widely recognised for its Indian influences and local adaptations, is positioned as a central storytelling tool. Guests engage directly with flavours, ingredients and preparation methods that reflect a fusion of traditions. "Food is the gateway," Naidoo noted. "It allows people to access culture in a way that is immediate and relatable, while also highlighting how our history has evolved into something uniquely Durban."

The tour also integrates small businesses, informal traders and local vendors into the experience, supporting broader participation within the tourism value chain. This model reflects a practical application of inclusive tourism principles, ensuring that economic benefits are distributed at a grassroots level. "If tourism is going to be sustainable, it has to benefit the people on the ground. That's where the real value lies," Naidoo added.

As experiential travel continues to gain momentum globally, the Little India Sugar & Spice Tour Series presents a scalable and relevant model for urban cultural tourism. By connecting heritage, cuisine and lived experience, it offers a compelling case for how cities like Durban can package their cultural assets into immersive, market-ready products that resonate with both domestic and international travellers.

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