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update

ISSUE 4

5 TRAVEL TRENDS

You can't afford to ignore

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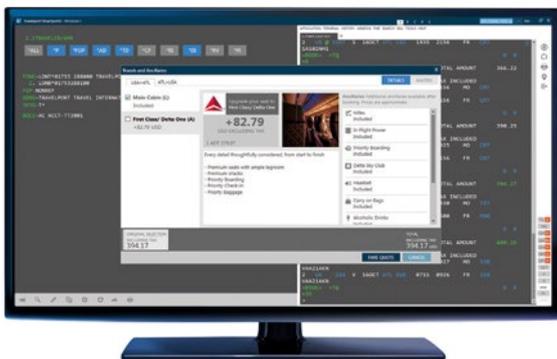
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CONTENTS

Issue 4 2015

TRAVEL

- 8 **STELLENBOSCH**
Take a winter Wineland break
- 9 **PARIS**
48 hours in the City of Light
- 11 **TRAVEL ADVICE**
Travel insurance: Read the fine print
- 13 **RAND SAVER**
These 5 apps can save you money
- 14 **DURBAN**
Take a sultry, sexy city break
- 20 **ZANZIBAR**
Not your average island holiday
- 26 **BOTSWANA**
Welcome to Africa's elephant capital
- 32 **TURKEY**
This guided holiday is a Turkish delight
- 36 **FIVE TRAVEL TRENDS**
Ignore these at your peril
- 38 **PARIS IN THE SUBURBS**
Get real with le locals
- 43 **ZIMBALI**
Exclusive luxury on the North Coast
- 44 **INTERCONTINENTAL**
Africa's best airport hotel

COMPETITIONS

- 4 **SMAAK**
Win a Smaak gadget hamper worth R1,000
- 19 **DURBAN HOLIDAY**
Win 4-night luxury Durban holiday with Misty Blue Properties

REGULARS

- 2 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 3 CONTRIBUTORS
- 5 TECH & GEAR
- 7 FABULOUS FINDS
- 40 TRAVEL NEWS

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GARDEN ROUTE -SOUTH AFRICA



EDITOR'S LETTER



I skimmed on my wedding to finance a two-week extravaganza to Croatia. I was so excited that the flights were booked

before my dress was chosen. And I was happy to forego a few essentials in our starter home to have my dream honeymoon. Who needs a new couch when you can make memories?

In this edition, you'll hopefully also find a few destinations that will make Cupid come calling.

The biggest comeback kid this year in South Africa's tourism industry is Durban (page 14).

A big fancy international newspaper called it one of the must-visit destinations of 2015. When I went there earlier this year, I found it offered travellers value for money with a few added surprises, and plenty to do for romantics. I wasn't disappointed when I visited Zanzibar (page 20) again this year either. Ever since I visited the island 15 years ago, I had wanted to return, and it's even better than I remember.

As a travel writer, I'm also getting more aware how technology and the internet are shaping the way I travel and how I deliver my stories. I'll sometimes choose my next destination on a particularly beguiling photo on Instagram, or a rave review on TripAdvisor. On page 36 the big guns in South Africa's tourism industry unpack five trends you can't afford to ignore.

Lastly, look out for two fun competitions in this edition. Our friends at Smaak are giving away 10 gadget hampers worth R1,000 to 10 of our readers. And, the kind people at Misty Blue are also spoiling one lucky couple with a romantic Durban break.

Happy travels!

Carla

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Michelle Marais, an architect turned writer from Cape Town, gives advice on how to turn your smartphone into a money-saving device. She wrote our Rand Saver column on p13.

The best place in the Cape for a romantic budget break is...

the quiet little seaside village of Yzerfontein.

If your date is cheap, take him to...

La Boheme Wine Bar & Bistro in Sea Point. They have a delicious three-course set menu for R150 and a range of wines by the glass.

Chocolate body paint is...

so Nineties!



Dawn Jorgensen is an earth advocate and beauty seeker and has been called the Oprah of South Africa's travel blogging scene. Read about her Turkish experience on p32

My favourite heartthrob is... Nick Cave for his intensity, passion and words.

The best place to skinny dip is... a remote farm dam under a full moon.

If I want to get my date in the mood, I feed them... love, bubbly and chocolate.



Simon Lewis, owner of Travel Concept Solutions, will make your brand famous, as long as you give him access to Wifi. His most important advice on p36? Your company needs invest in bloggers.

The best South African beach to have a romantic picnic is... Chintsa on the Wild Coast for remote romantics and Clifton in Cape Town for city lovers.

The sexiest hotel I've ever stayed is the... Bikini Hotel in Berlin.

The fuss about Christian Grey is...Who?



When the Chief Destineer at Destinate, **Mariette Du Toit-Helmbold**, gives you travel advice, you better sit up and pay attention. This international thought leader tells us on p36 how technology is changing destination marketing.

My favourite romantic spot in Stellenbosch is...Die Laan. You're not a Matie if you haven't been kissed there.

The perfect weekend in the Winelands includes... visiting Waterford for a chocolate and wine tasting (stock up on some good red for later), a walk in Jonkershoek nature reserve, drinks in Church Street and a spa and dinner date at Majeka House.

Scented candles are... less important than a bottle of good local Stellenbosch bubbly.



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▲ THE RAMBO OF SMARTPHONES

The Aspera R6 smartphone has a rugged, shock-resistant Aspera outer body, Gorilla Glass 3 for screen durability and touch keys for easy use. The R6 is certified IP68, meaning that it's entirely waterproof up to 1 meter for up to 30 minutes and completely dust resistant. It also comes with a 13 megapixel camera. Available at www.be-akin.co.za for **R7 999**.

▼ ACTION CAM

Record your adventures with the Kaiser Baas X100 Wi-Fi Action Camera. It comes with a wide-angle, six-layered glass lens that's perfect for shots from the ground, air or even underwater (using the waterproof housing). With the included wrist remote, record, stop and play functions are all available at the touch of a button. Available at The Gadget Shop for **R2 499**.



Gadgets FOR TRAVELLERS

These hardy gizmos will serve you well on the road.

▼ INSTA-PHOTO

The Fujifilm Instax Mini 8 instant camera brings instant fun and excitement to your everyday life. The camera automatically determines the best brightness for taking a photograph and informs you of the best setting by lighting the corresponding lamp. It couldn't be easier. **R899** at www.superbalist.com



◀ SHAKE THE SHAKES

The iStabilizer Flex flexible leg tripod for smartphones has a wrapping capability which allows you to secure your smartphone to virtually any surface. Capture incredible images without the shakes typically associated with hand-held photography. Available at iStores, iWorld and www.be-akin.co.za (**R349**).



▶ SAFE AND SEALED

Protect your valuables on the road with LOKSAK, a line of bags that offer protection from the elements. LOKSAK bags protect things like documents, medical supplies and electronic equipment, anywhere from a beach to a campsite to water (up to 60 metres!). From **R190** at Metro, Vodacom 4U and New World.



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◀ **BRILLIANT BACKPACK**

The Overboard 20 liter backpack (R1 340 at www.be-akin.co.za, www.overboardafrica.com and selected retailers) protects your gear from water, sand, dirt and dust. Its seamless construction and roll top sealing system ensures that this backpack is 100% waterproof, suitable for quick submersion.

▼ **WORLD ON YOUR WRIST**

Indulge your travel craving at home with this watch from Cheapo. It's perfect for the urban explorer, with rugged leather straps and metal loops holding a classic, round face encasing a map of Europe. R599 on superbalist.com



Five FAVOURITES

This month we love...

▼ **SUPER SEEDS**

NuSeed snackpacks are a delicious, easy-to-pack and healthy snack for travellers on the run, or hikers looking for an energy boost. The conveniently sized packs fit easily into any handbag or backpack. From R39,99 per box at selected retailers.



◀ **TERRIFIC TRESSES**

Terenzo's Liquid Hair product range instantly repairs, nourishes and strengthens damaged hair. It's ideal for hair that's been exposed to saltwater and sun. From R295 at all Terenzo salons



GERM BLASTER ▶

Going hiking and unsure about drinking the water on the way? One Drop water purification drops are tasteless, odourless and contain no chlorine. Four drops per litre kills off dangerous germs like cholera and E. coli. R60 for 30 ml at www.onedrop.co.za





STELLENBOSCH

Stellenbosch offers countless indoor and outdoor activities for the cooler months. Make the best of winter in the Winelands with these ideas. From cafes in the town centre to restaurants on wine estates, there is no shortage of winter activities in the City of Oaks.

MUST SEE

The best way to explore town is on foot, so get those sneakers on (or a pair of Wellies if you strike Stellenbosch on a typical wet winter's day). **The Tourism Buro, Stellenbosch 360**, is located at 36 Market Street and will supply you with a free guide on what to do and where to explore.

It may not be the Louvre, but if you want to see some of South Africa's biggest names in the art world, you need to visit the **Sasol Art Museum (52 Ryneveld Street)**. Here, visitors can experience the works of Maggie Laubser, Irma Stern, Thomas Baines and Alexis Preller, as well as more contemporary artists such as Cecil Skotnes and Judith Mason. The museum is closed on a Monday.

Don't be put off by the smell of dried fish when entering **Oom Samie se Winkel (84 Dorp Street)**. This quirky little shop is one of Stellenbosch's favourite establishments. You can buy anything from brooms and old luggage sets to boiled sweets and vintage clothing at this old trading post. It's like a trip back in time, tinged with nostalgia.

MUST DO

There is no reason why South Africa's Methodé Cap Classique (MCC) should be regarded as inferior to French champagne. To learn more about MCC, pop in at the **J.C. Le Roux cellar in the Devon Valley**, where each Cap Classique is created in the French tradition. For a bit of fun, try the Marshmallow and Meringue pairing. Three MCC's and two sparkling wines are paired with gourmet marshmallows and meringues. Visit www.jcleroux.co.za for more information.

Also visit **Uva Mira (www.uvamira.com) off Annandale Road** for one of the best boutique wine experiences in the area. They are the highest altitude winery

in Stellenbosch. Expect a steep winding drive with magnificent views from the top. Uva Mira also serves a great cheese platter.

TOP TIP

Head to **De Oude Bank Bakkerij (Corner of Bird and Church Street)** for the best breakfast in town. Stellenbosch local and food blogger Ilse Van der Merwe says their baked sour dough bread and cappuccinos come highly recommended. If you're visiting over a weekend, sister establishment **De Brasserie** hosts a live band every Saturday night. Order one if their thin-base pizzas, topped with fresh local produce and baked in a wood-fired oven, and wash it down with a local craft beer. ■

SPECIAL OFFER

Kleine Zalze is offering a Terroir Package consisting of one night's accommodation at Kleine Zalze Lodge on a bed and breakfast basis, a winter plate at Terroir Restaurant, a complimentary wine tasting and a complimentary bottle of wine on arrival. Valid to 30 September 2015, starting at R650 per person sharing per night (www.kleinezalze.co.za)



PARIS

You can spend weeks in The City of Love and Light, but what if you only have a day or two to spare? We show you how to make the best of a short visit.

MUST SEE

Start your weekend at **Montmartre**, birthplace of the Parisian *la vie bohème* and one of the Parisian suburbs with the best view over the city. Pay a visit to the **Sacre Coeur**, an elaborate Byzantine church at the top of the hill that some people refer to as “The Wedding Cake.” The view will whet your appetite for the next few days. Then take a stroll between paint-splattered street artists and have a glass of wine at the **Place du Tertre**. It’s one of the best spots for some people watching in Paris.

The best time to visit the **Eiffel Tower** is in the morning, but be prepared to queue! If you’re not fond of standing in long lines, buy your ticket beforehand at www.tou Eiffel.paris. Ironman athletes can take the stairs to the second floor, but there are lifts. Be prepared to queue a bit over here as well.

Invest in a **Paris Museum Pass** that will not only save you money, but also allow you to skip the queues at selected museums. The queues at the **Louvre** stretch into eternity, no matter what time of year you visit. If it’s your first time in this iconic museum, hightail it to the **Grand Galerie**, where you’ll find most of

the masterpieces by artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli. And, of course, you can’t leave the Louvre without braving the mosh pit in front of the Mona Lisa.

After this, head to the **Pont Neuf**, Paris’ oldest and most famous bridge. You’ll probably recognise it from movies like Woody Allen’s *Midnight in Paris* and the romantic drama *Before Sunset*. The bridge takes you to the Ile de la Cite, with two of Paris’ most popular attractions. To the left, you’ll find the **Sainte-Chapelle church** with its beautiful stained-glass windows, and to the right the **Notre-Dame Cathedral** towers over the cityscape.

MUST DO

Skip your bland buffet breakfast and head to the streets in search of the nearest **boulangerie**. Buy

a few croissants and pastries and wash it down with a café au lait. You’ll wonder how Parisian women keep their figures when sampling these Parisian staples.

Want to pay homage to a rock and roll legend? **Père Lachaise** is Paris’ biggest cemetery and home to the remains of some of history’s most famous artists and writers, including writer Oscar Wilde and rock star Jim Morrison. Take a hip flask filled with bourbon and spill a bit on his grave to pay tribute to one of history’s greatest musicians.

A visit to Paris wouldn’t be complete without a stroll down one of the world’s most famous streets, **Champs Élysées**. Savour a macaroon at **Ladurée** – arguably the best in the world. A box of these little fluffs of happiness will set you back a cool €17,80, but it’s worth every penny! ■

TOP TIP

One of the best ways to explore Paris is by bicycle. **Velib** (en.velib.paris.fr) is the Uber of bike rides in Paris. For less than €2 you can hire a bike for the day at one of the many Vélib stations across the city. Just follow the instructions on the machine. When finished, simply drop it off at your nearest Vélib station.



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FROM 'WHAT IF' TO 'WHOOPSY-DAISY' AND EVERYWHERE IN-BETWEEN

There's a lot that can go wrong on your perfect trip. Misplaced luggage, a stolen passport or catching an exotic virus can seriously derail your well-planned holiday or business trip – if you're not prepared. With Regent's wide range of travel insurance products suited to your specific budget, age group and destination, your travelling risks are handled by our team of experts. Which means that you can enjoy the experience of travelling without a care in the world – no matter where you're going.

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WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES

When it comes to travel insurance, it helps reading the fine print, as some activities are not covered. Louise Cockcroft answers some frequently asked questions about getting the right coverage.

I'm going on a skiing holiday in December and will be engaging in some adventure activities like snowboarding. Should I take out special travel insurance for this?

It's very important to check the benefits provided by a travel insurance policy and to ensure that these types of activities covered. Not all of them include cover for adventure activities.

Regent's leisure policies automatically include cover for most leisure adventure activities, including snow skiing and snowboarding. If a traveller wants to do an activity that goes beyond the "normal" leisure activity, such as playing a full contact sport in a tournament, they would need to confirm with Regent if this cover could be provided.

We're going overlanding in Africa for a few months. If my car breaks down in the bush, will my travel insurance cover this?

No. Travel insurance only covers loss or damage to luggage and personal belongings carried with you on a journey. A motor vehicle would not be considered a luggage item or "personal belonging". However, if any injuries are sustained during the journey, medical expenses would be covered, as long as any off-roading is done on a clearly marked road or trail.

I'm going hiking in the Fish River Canyon in Namibia. Do I need

to take out special insurance in case I'm injured and I need to be medevaced?

A traveller should check that their policy provides cover for activities such as hiking and that medical evacuation is included. Regent's travel insurance



policies cover hiking, as long as the insured is hiking on a clearly marked route. If it's not clearly marked, the insured must be accompanied by a recognised and experienced guide who knows the trail.

In a situation where an insured is injured while hiking, Regent's medical assistance company, Europ Assistance, must be contacted. They will arrange for a medevac to get the injured to the nearest medical facility.

I'm renting a car in Europe. The rental company is charging me extra for tyre insurance and theft. Isn't this covered by my travel insurance and will they cover the access if the car is damaged?

A travel insurance policy would not cover a rented vehicle for loss or damages. The traveller would need to arrange this cover with the rental car company as per their rental agreement. Under Regent's Luxury Leisure Cover there is a benefit that provides R10 000 cover for the excess that a traveller becomes liable for if the rental car they hired is damaged or stolen.

If I leave my laptop and my camera in my luggage and my luggage is stolen, will my travel insurance cover this?

Because of the risk of loss or damage to a laptop or camera when stored in luggage, this is not covered by Regent's travel insurance policies. A laptop or camera must be kept on your person at all times to ensure safety from damage and loss.

Not all travel insurance policies provide cover for accidental loss – some only provide cover for a loss due to theft. If accidental loss is not provided on a policy and a camera or laptop is "forgotten" on a bus, train or hotel, this would not be covered. It is important for a traveller to check that their policy does provide cover for accidental loss. ■



Louise Cockcroft is the head of travel insurance at Regent Insurance. For more information on travel insurance, visit www.regentinsurance.co.za or call 0861 900 801.

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AROUND THE WORLD IN 5 APPS

Before embarking on your next adventure, download these five travel apps from Google's Play Store or Apple's AppStore. They will make your journey easier and save you money on your trip. **By Michelle Marais**

TRIPADVISOR

If you don't have time to plod through a travel guide, this app is perfect for you. Restaurants, bars, hotels and landmarks are ranked according to a five-star system by fellow users. With filters like price, style and traveller rating, you'll be able to find exactly what you're looking for – even special offers! If you're planning to head to a foreign city and want to save on your roaming costs, be sure to download TripAdvisor's Offline City Guides app. It will provide you with a curated city guide of more than 80 destinations and it can be accessed without a mobile data connection.

AIRBNB

With more than one million listings, no hotel booking site can match Airbnb's diversity. The rental options range from impressive castles to small studio apartments – even vans and sofas are listed – and it's sure to accommodate anyone's budget. The only admin required is authenticating your identity and arranging the key hand-off with the hosts. Wary of internet scams? Rest assured that the service offers a number of features to help build trust, including user reviews, a Host Guarantee and Verified ID. If any suspicious activity is noticed, it is investigated and immediately flagged.

TRAVELPONY

Unlike other travel sites, Travelpony doesn't spend its money on advertising. Instead it provides

via your existing Facebook account and receive discounts when you share the app with your friends on social media networks. With a no mess, no fuss approach, it comes as no surprise that they're the fastest growing travel company around.

UBER

Reliable transport is always a concern when visiting a foreign country. Being a cashless service, Uber allows you to register with your credit card details and book a taxi using the GPS coordinates of your location and destination. The app also provides you with an accurate fare estimate before confirming your booking. In Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg in particular, UberX is the most affordable taxi service. With a base fare of R5 and a charge of R6 per kilometre and R0.60 per minute, a 5-kilometre trip will cost you no more than R40. Travelling with a partner? Split the fare and save even more.

SKYPE

If you're looking to stay in touch with loved ones while trotting the globe, look no further. Skype allows you to message, phone or video chat with anyone anywhere in the world at a very low rate. You'll save oodles on roaming charges and international calling fees. ■



customers with incredible discounts – up to 50%. The site even publishes competitors' rates to prove it. Log in



27

23

WELCOME GOLD VALLEY

WELCOME GOLD VALLEY



DURBAN IS FOR LOVERS

The New York Times recently named Durban as one of their must-see destinations for 2015. Carla Lewis-Balden headed there and discovered a sexy, rejuvenated city, ideal for a romantic break.



My parents had their honeymoon in Durban. Paging through their faded photos, tinged with sepia and nostalgia, I linger on an image of them eating ice cream on the promenade.

My mother, straight out of high school, is squeezed into a tiny bikini that barely covers her modesty. My dad, sporting a Ziggy Stardust mullet and cut-off denim shorts, defiantly pouts at the camera, à la Mick Jagger.

They're giddy on youth, optimism, love and a whole life of possibilities that stretches out in front of them. It was 1972 and for South Africans, Durban offered something a little bit tropical, a little bit exotic, but within South African borders. By day you could ride a rickshaw, stroll down palm-lined avenues and eat a samoosa. Nights were spent partying away on Point Road, with punk rockers or at session discos.

My parents' love affair with Durban continued into our family holidays. Even now, when I smell coconut-scented suntan lotion and eat a caramel dip soft serve, I'm six again, sand in my swimming costume with the faint taste of seawater lingering on my tongue.

But the veneer cracked when my mom's bag was swiped on the beach, and my dad got offered drugs when he took us to The Wheel shopping centre for the latest Disney animated movie.

The love affair came to an abrupt end.

Now, almost twenty years after our last Durban beach holiday, I'm standing on the promenade. Thai people have a lovely expression, "same-same, but different". That's the vibe that I'm getting from "New" Durban.

The air still smells like it used to, salty with a tinge of fried food and suntan lotion. The street hawkers are still there, but instead of seashell-encrusted jewelry boxes they peddle Made in China Panama hats, Bob Marley T-shirts and recycled tyre sandals.

In the late 1990's and 2000's, Durban became a bit of a persona non grata in the South African tourism industry. While Cape Town wooed and charmed travellers with wine routes and boutique accommodation, Durban attracted attention for all the wrong reasons: muggings on the beach front and murder stats to rival those of some Central American cities.

Then came the Soccer World Cup and the Golden Mile got a facelift and a bit of Botox. Soon, *The New York Times* had it on their must-see list for 2015. Cape Town may still be the world's favourite tourism darling in South Africa, but Durban is the quirky hipster sister who's growing up. She's not too mainstream to be too cool, and she's still a bit dishevelled around the edges. She wears Mr Price instead of designer duds. But she's got something. And when you fall for her, you fall hard.

5 ROMANTIC DURBAN EXPERIENCES

The great thing about Durban is that it caters for certain proletarian pleasures, which makes it an affordable romantic destination. Yes, you get fancy food pairings and boutique experiences, but the best way to experience Durban is still through simple indulgences. The beach front is pure nostalgia, eating a pink coiffed-up piece of cotton candy on the pier or a hamburger draped in that red tomato sauce that stains your fingers.

HIRE A BIKE ON THE PROMENADE

I start my day at the Bike and Bean, a coffee shop that also hires bikes. The coffee shop is located near the Moses Mabida stadium, right on the beach, with bean bags that look over the surf. A loop from the Bike and Bean to uShaka Marine World and back again is about 10km, just enough to placate those feelings of guilt about the



milkshake and brownie you'll have afterwards. It costs R50 per hour to rent a bike; tandems are R100, but you can also bring your own. Their banana smoothies come highly recommended and locals rave about the cappuccinos.

Snell Parade, Durban, Phone +27 82 773 6870 for more information or visit www.bikebeandurban.co.za

DRINK A COCKTAIL

Forget about wine, you're in the tropics now. And that means you can drink brightly coloured cocktails with more accessories than a former Miss South Africa at the Durban July, without any judgement. Try a California martini at California Dreaming (150 O R Tambo Parade, +27 31 332 0037) right next to the Rachel Finlayson salt-water swimming pool. The cocktail is made with vanilla flavoured vodka and served with a splash of sparkling wine on the side. If you have a little bit more moola to burn, try the Panorama Bar and pool deck at Tsogo Sun's Elangeni (63 Snell Parade Durban +27 31 362 1300). The cocktails are pricey, but the view is worth it.

CANOODLE ON THE PIER

You can't go kissing under the boardwalk, but you can always pretend to be a teenager again and kiss on the many piers that line the promenade. You will find some great photo opportunities here as well – anglers looking for the catch of the day or lovers holding hands. Our favourite is Vetch's Pier, more commonly known as Vetchies, that stretches 500 metres into the sea. During a calm day and low tide it's also one of Durban's best snorkeling spots.

RIDE A CABLE CAR

Buy a Neapolitan ice cream for you and your sweetheart and hop on the cable cars at Fun World Amusement Park on the promenade. The amusement park still has fun fair staples like bumper cars, spinning shells and a carousel, but it's the cable cars that attract the couples.

Built in a simpler time, with simpler safety rules, you are basically held in place with a steel bar over your lap. The views are great, try to go just before sunset, as the sun eases itself behind the high rise hotels of the Golden Mile.

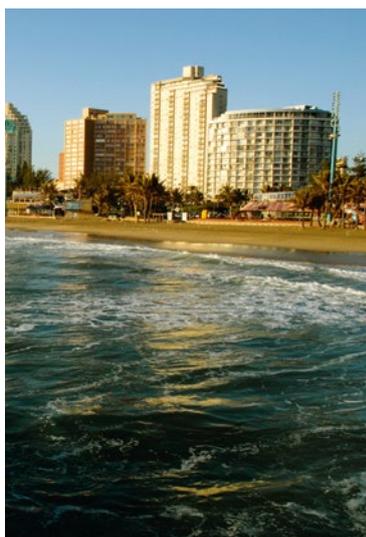
Fun World Amusement Park is situated opposite the Marine Parade Holiday Inn on the promenade.

HOT LIPS AND BUNNY CHOWS

Ask any Durbanite where you can find an excellent bunny chow and the chance is good that they will direct you to the House of Curries on Florida Road. The decor is more sports bar than curry house, but it's packed with locals on a Thursday night when I arrive just before 17:00.

Don't expect any fancy kormas or vindaloos. here you get served a good old fashioned Durban curry, in mild, medium or hot, in a roti, bunny chow, on rice or with chips. You also get a choice between chicken, beef, mutton and prawn. Be warned, their bunny chows are menhir-sized monoliths, filled with spicy goodness. You'll need a hearty appetite to finish one of these by yourself, so it's better to share it with your sweetheart. But pair it with a South African staple like Black Label beer and you'll be eating like a local.

275 Florida Rd, Morningside Durban. Phone +27 31 303 6076 to book a table.



LOVE NESTS

AUBERGE HOLLANDAISE

Take a little bit of Provence in France and transplant it in the Zulu Kingdom. This is Auberge Hollandaise, a chic five-star sanctuary in Durban North, with its stylish continental décor with a twist of tropical fun.

It's not hard to see why people rave about this guest house on Tripadvisor. If you're not fond of the idea of a big hotel, this intimate boutique guesthouse will charm the pants off you. The rooms are thoughtfully laid out, with treats such as espresso machines and nougat cookies in every suite.

Ask for breakfast on your room's balcony, it's a great way to start the day with a view over lush greenery and the Indian Ocean shimmering in the distance.

The pool is a treat as well if you're recovering from a wedding or just looking for some R&R. It's the ideal place to laze around with a trashy beach read.

However, if you're looking to explore, catch an Uber taxi to the promenade, which is about five kilometres away.

106 Kenneth Kaunda Rd, Durban North.

To book, visit www.ahguesthouse.co.za, call +27 31 564 8568 or send an email to gm@ahguesthouse.co.za or info@mistyblue.co.za



THE WATERFRONT

Looking for a more sophisticated city break? Try The Waterfront, a hotel housed in a beautiful old heritage building in Mahatma Gandhi Road in the Point area.

The Waterfront mixes gritty, edgy décor with sumptuous finishings. The hotel overlooks the Durban harbour and is walking distance from attractions such as uShaka Marine World and the promenade.

The hotel's in-house restaurant, Wodka, is reminiscent of a stylish New York joint in Tribeca or the Meatpacking District, with exposed walls and red brick juxtaposed with velvet couches, chrome and glass. Their Jack Daniel's basted chicken wings are a treat and a favourite on their menu.

For another treat, book one of their superior rooms with views over the Indian Ocean and Durban harbour.

The rooms are modern and functional without being cold and sterile. And larger than you would find at most chains.

The Point area is one of Durban's most exciting developments and quirky restaurants and fashionable boutiques are investing here.

40 Mahatma Gandhi Rd Durban.

To book, visit www.thewaterfronthotel.co.za, call +27 31 332 8190 or send an email to gm@thewaterfronthotel.co.za or info@mistyblue.co.za ■



WIN A ROMANTIC HOLIDAY IN DURBAN

Misty Blue Properties are offering one couple a four night stay at their properties in Durban. The winners can look forward to two nights at the Auberge Hollandaise guest house in Durban North and two nights at the Waterfront Hotel and Spa, right on the promenade.

THE PRIZE INCLUDES

- Two nights at the Auberge Hollandaise, including breakfast
- Two nights at the Waterfront Hotel and Spa, including breakfast
- Couples massage at the Aqua Spa
- Dinner for 2 for one night to the value of R500

To win, send an email with "Misty Blue Competition" in the subject field to win@travelupdate.co.za. Include your name and contact details. T&C's apply. Closing date, 30 September 2015.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Accommodation to be confirmed at Auberge Hollandaise Guest House or The Waterfront Hotel & Spa on condition of availability
- Prize to be redeemed before 30 June 2016
- Prize to be redeemed out of in-peak season dates
- Prize includes bed and breakfast and 1 dinner to the value of R500. The rest of the meals, transport and beverages are not included.
- Prize includes 1 hour Aqua Spa couples massage during your stay at the Waterfront
- Prize cannot be exchanged for cash, used in conjunction with another current special or voucher or gifted to someone else
- By entering this competition you give the Misty Blue Group permission to add your details to their database
- By entering this competition and if you are selected as the winner you agree to give the Misty Blue Group permission to take photographs of yourself and your partner for marketing purposes when redeeming your prize

ISLAND SPICE

Sick of generic resorts and looking for an authentic island experience? Try Zanzibar. It's affordable and only a few hours by plane from South Africa, writes **Carla Lewis-Balden**.

Photos by **Marzahn Botha**

When people talk about Zanzibar, I often hear them talking about the island's smell:

The scent of cloves being carried on trade winds or the whiff of tropical decay in Stone Town's cobblestone-lined streets.

For me, Zanzibar was about the sounds: Waking up with the muezzins calling the devout to prayer just before sunrise; stumbling upon a rowdy game of street soccer in Stone Town's narrow lanes; listening to the clanging of church bells announcing Sunday mass, or the popular Taarab music drifting out of doorways.

Beach holidays, especially those of the island package variety, can feel a bit sterile, a bit unchallenging. Most people on these packages rarely venture out of their luxury resorts to experience the culture of the islands they're visiting.

But Zanzibar can be different. Even when staying at The Zanzibar

Serena Hotel, one of Stone Town's most luxurious hotels, I never felt detached from my surroundings.

Our sea-view suit overlooked a cerulean blue sea, dotted with higgledy-piggledy structures rising from the water. "It looks like something out of *Pirates of the Caribbean*," my travel companion remarked. The beach in front of the hotel isn't part of its property but instead open to the public. In the morning, we woke up to an impromptu yoga lesson, with hajib-ed women doing downward-facing dogs and warrior poses on the beach.

Taking a few steps down to the sand or onto the street felt like walking straight into a Steve McCurry photo-shoot. During our wanderings we received an impromptu Swahili language lesson from Hamed, a fisherman, followed by a history lesson on Tipo Tipp, one of history's most notorious slave traders.

In the alleys of Stone Town we

were also introduced to Isaq, a teenage boy who poses for photos with the swag of a gangster rapper. Asa, a young woman, was as intrigued by us as we were by her.

Zanzibari women are camera-shy and weary of foreign tourists, but as we chatted, Asa pouted and flashed us a peace sign while being snapped by the photographer. When we showed her the photos on the viewfinder, she squealed in delight.

NUBILE NUNGWI

I've never taken any mind-altering drugs, but a drug-induced trip must feel something akin to seeing the Ras Nungwi beach for the first time. The water is a clear psychedelic turquoise, contrasted against an azure-blue sky.

The beach is located on the northwestern part of the island and is one of Zanzibar's most popular ones.

Resorts sit cheek to jowl, from the more budget-conscious Langi-Langi





beach bungalows (where we stayed), to exclusive Italian resorts where an armband is your ticket to eating and drinking as much as you like.

European women, their skins roasted to hues of Peking duck by the Zanzibari sun, walk hand in hand with beach boys draped in red Masai cloth. Ask anyone and they will tell you they're a true Masai, even if they wear knock-off Ray-Bans and Havaianas.

At many of Zanzibar's beaches you can only swim at high tide, but at Ras Nungwi you can splash around even when the tide recedes. The water is perfect – that spot just above body temperature when chocolate starts to melt.

WILD COAST

If you like your beach holidays unspoiled and the idea of resort life makes you cringe, head on over to Matemwe beach, on the eastern part of the island. It reminded me of the Transkei in the Eastern Cape – you may share your piece of sand with the local livestock. The beaches are magnificent, however: long stretches of powder-white sand where women harvest seaweed during low tide. Although some resorts and hotels dislike these foragers in front of their establishments, Matemwe Beach Village embraces this local tradition.



ZANZIBAR

Africa Stay is giving you a chance to win and be one of 30 teams to hunt for your share of R750 000 worth of treasure while you stay at the luxurious 5 star Emerald Collection's Dream of Zanzibar Hotel in Zanzibar. Visit www.africastay.com to enter.

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4 & 7 Night packages include: Return flights ex JNB to ZNZ on Mango, airport taxes, return airport/hotel transfers, meals as indicated, based on per person sharing. Prices are per person sharing subject to availability and fluctuations. Please check final price for dates of travel. Airline supplement of R2 400pp will apply over peak season departures. T&Cs apply. E&OE .



The resort employs staff from the village and tries to minimize its impact on the environment and the local community. While lazing around the pool, a drove of goats came storming through, and with breakfast, a cow was grazing languidly outside the restaurant.

Here your body adapts to the

flow of the tide and the cycle of the sun. Sunrise is usually spent on the beach with a cup of coffee and rusks, dusk is celebrated with a Tusker, the local beer.

One afternoon we took a walk to the Matemwe village, where we bought freshly caught octopus from the local fishermen. The octopus

was cleaned and prepared to perfection by the hotel's chef.

On our last day, we rose early to enjoy our last sunrise in Zanzibar. The tide was slowly coming in, its gentle slosh-slosh mixing with the rickety creaks of locals riding their bicycles to work. Somewhere, a rooster crowed.

STAY HERE



STONE TOWN

The **Zanzibar Serena Inn** probably has the best address in Stone Town. It overlooks a public beach, and there are few places where I've had breakfast with such a spectacular view. The rooms are decorated in a tropical style and you feel a bit like a cross between Karen Blixen and Ernest Hemingway as you sit on your balcony, sipping a rum punch and watching the fishing dhows come in with their catch of the day. It's also right in the middle of Stone Town and walking distance from the seafood market, good restaurants and the House of Wonders (this used to be a palace and is still the tallest building in Stone Town).

Visit www.serenahotels.com, send an e-mail to reservations@serenahotels.co.za or call 011 021 2607/8



NUNGWI

Nungwi is choc-a-bloc with expensive all-inclusive resorts, but the charming **Langi-Langi beach bungalows** offer excellent value for money. Every room still has the necessary luxuries, and if you get tired of the salty seawater, the pool, located in a bougainvillea-fringed garden, offers an escape from the heat and the crowds. If you're lucky, the local family of dik-diks may come and say hello. If it's a special occasion and you feel like splurging a bit, ask for the Salme suite, which has a spectacular view over the sea.

Visit www.langilangizanzibar.com or send an e-mail to reservations@langilangizanzibar.com



MATEMWE BEACH

If you like beach life, but hate sterile beach resorts, you will fall in love with **Matemwe Beach Village**. The guesthouse is located on one of the more unspoilt beaches of Zanzibar and life here goes on pretty much as it has for centuries. The food is delectable and the chef prepares innovative dishes with few ingredients. This is the place to chill and escape from the world, whether it is between the turquoise and purple muslin drapes in the main building, or at the pool, nursing one of their legendary mojitos. Expect barefoot luxury and unspoilt, deserted beaches.

Visit www.matemwebeach.net or send an e-mail to matemwebeachvillage@zitec.org

GETTING THERE

We flew with Fastjet, which departs from Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport for Dar es Salaam's Julius Nyerere International Airport on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Flights between the two cities cost as little as R1,177 one way, including airport taxes, which are approximately R577. The total cost includes one item of hand luggage at no charge.

Since October 2014, Fastjet has been offering flights to Zanzibar in partnership with Tanzanian local carrier Coastal Aviation from around R2,100, including all government and airport taxes. Upon landing in Dar es Salaam, a Coastal Aviation representative meets Fastjet passengers at the airport and helps them check in for the connecting flight to Zanzibar, departing at 07h30.

Return flights operate on the same days as the Dar es Salaam – Johannesburg flights. Book flights online at www.fastjet.com/za, where the cheapest fares and luggage charges are guaranteed; by telephone via fastjet's customer service centre on +27 (0)11 289 8090; by emailing [customer.southafrica@fastjet.com](mailto:southafrica@fastjet.com); or at their offices at O.R. Tambo.

TRANSFERS AND TRANSPORT

Transfers were done by Zanzibar Airport Transfers, which offers affordable and reliable transfers between hotels and the airport. Their service was punctual and the air-conditioned vehicle was a welcome luxury in Zanzibar's tropical heat. Find them at www.zanzibarairporttransfers.co.tz or call +255 777 043720.

ESSENTIAL INFO

Zanzibar is a high-risk area for malaria. Speak to your doctor about prophylactics and stock up on insect repellent. Also take the right clothing, i.e. light coloured long-sleeved shirts and blouses and trousers for the evenings, when mosquitoes are most active.

The best beaches lie on the northwestern parts of the island, but it's also the most crowded. The beaches on the eastern side are much quieter, but at some you can't swim during low tide.

The Zanzibari people, although extremely photogenic, aren't too fond of photographers or tourists with cameras. Ask before you snap. We found that a big smile, followed by "Huenda i kuchukua picha?" ('May I take a picture?' in Swahili) often loosened the locals up a bit. Although everyone speaks English, a few words in Swahili are appreciated.

Treat your family to paradise

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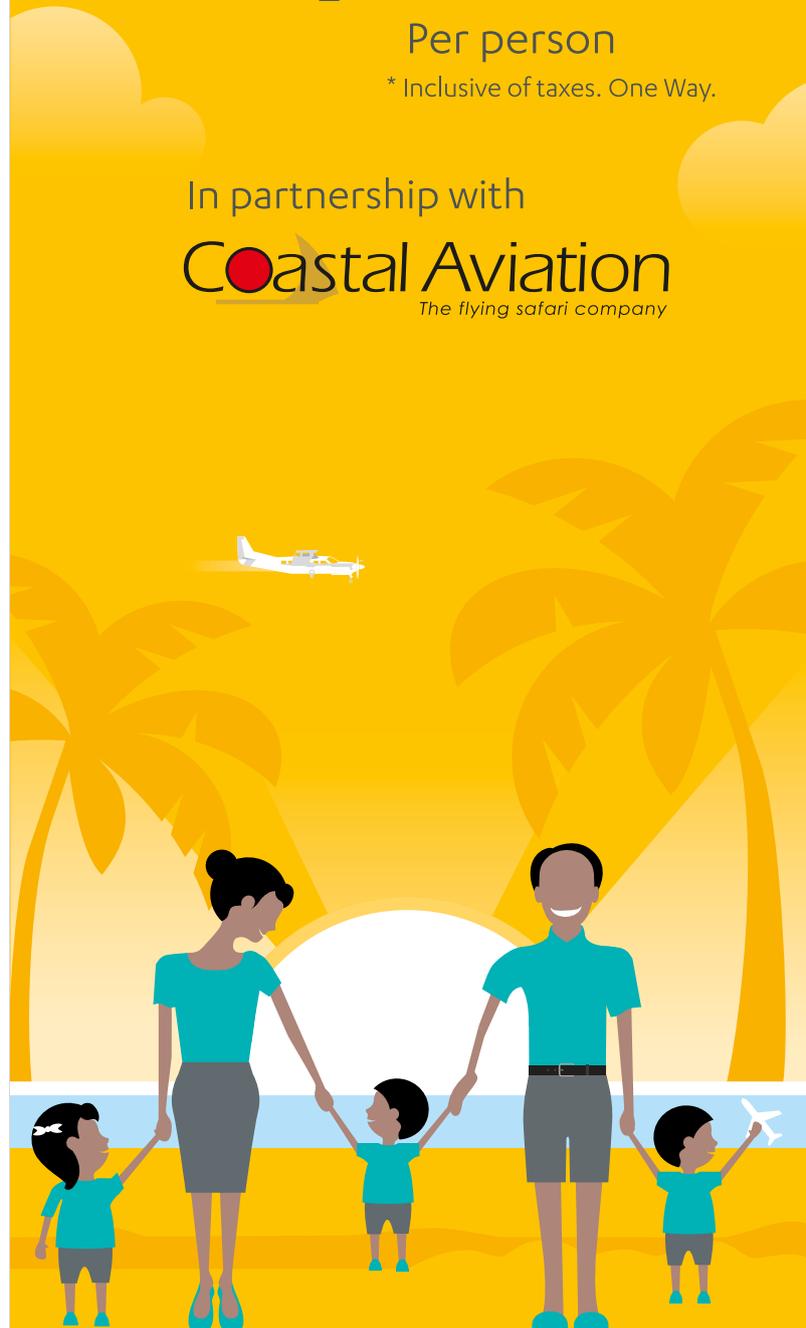
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THE CHILL SIDE OF CHOBE

Chobe National Park in Botswana used to be one of
Carla Lewis-Balden's least favourite African parks.
Then she visited it during the quiet season.





During peak season the main street of Kasane turns into a mosh pit, as game viewing vehicles and self-drivers jostle at the petrol station to fill up. On the river, safari outfitters compete between pods of hippos to give their guests the best safari selfie of the day, getting dangerously close to the animals.

To make matters worse, self-drive travelers were banned from the River Road a few years ago during peak season, as the road started to resemble a lion sighting in front of Skukuza during the December holidays. In an attempt to curb the mayhem, Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks gave preference to safari vehicles during peak times to avoid any fist fights over lion sightings.

The River Road runs parallel with the Chobe River, and it's here where a lot of the action takes place. But if you come with your own wheels, you are banished to the hinterlands of Chobe's inner park. You drive up and down, praying for a sighting while smug Americans and Europeans on safari vehicles gape at elephants frolicking in the river.

Being constrained by all these rules was never my idea of a holiday in an unspoiled, off-the-beaten-track region of Africa. But my perception of Chobe changed somewhat after a visit in the quiet season, and I've come to realise your Chobe experience depends a lot on two things: Where you stay and when you visit.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

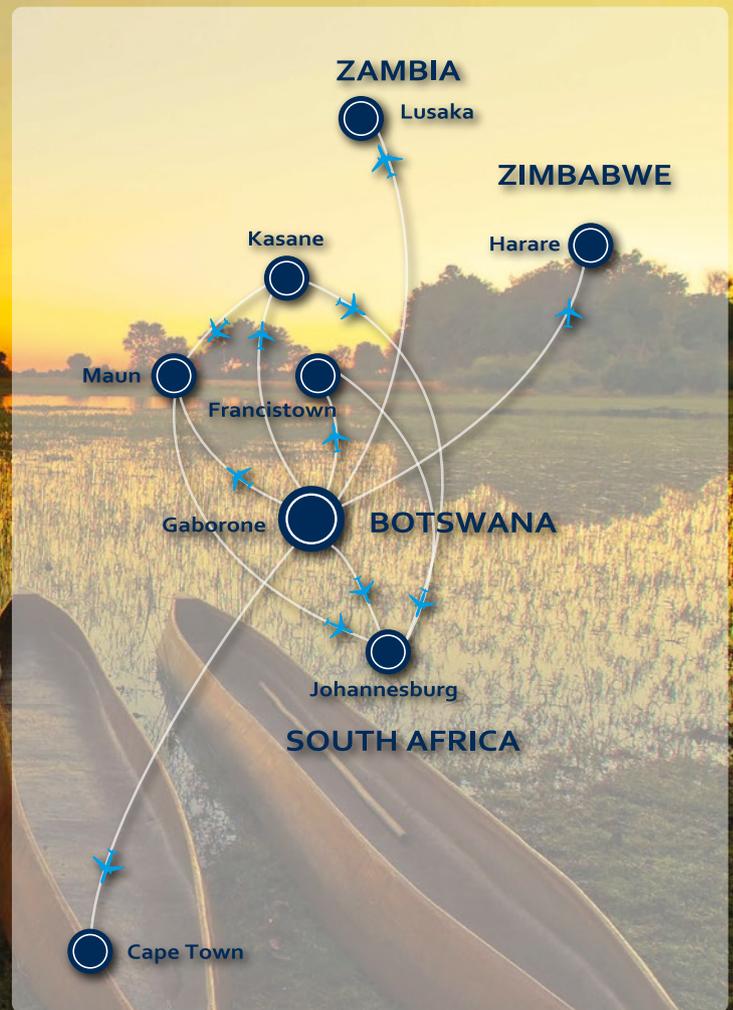
Contrary to popular belief, the lodges near and in Kasane are not the prime spots for an authentic wilderness experience. As far as safari real estate goes, Ngoma Safari Lodge ticks all the important boxes. Gorgeous view? Check. As you



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Alternatively book and pay online @ www.airbotswana.co.bw



enter the lodge, you are confronted with a view that forces you to stop for a few seconds just to take everything in. The lodge is situated close to the quieter Ngoma gate, a good 50 kilometres from busy Kasane Town. Perched on top of a hill, it overlooks the floodplains of Chobe, giant baobab trees and the shimmering quicksilver of the Chobe River.

Lots of game activities close to the lodge? Another check. With our arrival, a dazzle of zebras were drinking at the waterhole. It was the beginning of the dry season, which means more animals congregate towards the river.

The spacious suites are the cherry on the top. The rooms are even better than I expected. They are large chalets decorated in muted, earthy colours, each with its own private plunge pool and outdoor shower, should you prefer to go *au natural* in the African bush. Honeymooners love it.

Chobe may not be Africa's most unspoiled nature reserve, but as far as game viewing goes, it has to be one of the best. The Serengeti has the wildebeest migration, but Chobe has one of the largest elephant populations in Africa. Ecologically, these bush bulldozers are a bit of a disaster, but if you're paying top dollar for an African safari, you can be sure you'll be getting a lot of Ellie action here.

The first sundowner drive does not disappoint; We drink G&T's while watching a herd of buffalo treating themselves to a bath in a mud wallow. Egrets duck and peck between the great mass of bodies, looking out for juicy ticks. The bird watching is amazing in Chobe. We tick several species off our list, white-faced whistling ducks, several species of herons, cormorants and francolins. I'm holding out for the African skimmer, one of Africa's most endangered birds. Twitchers from all over the world visit Chobe to brag that they've spotted this elusive bird.



THE RIVER WILD

One of the highlights at Ngoma is the full-day safari, which starts early morning and ends with a boat ride in the afternoon. On the game drive we quickly spot four of the big five (rhinos are extinct in Chobe). I also see a southern carmine bee eater for the first time, a bird with feathers in vivid hues of crimson, magenta and fuchsia. It's like a little carnival on its own. Then we pass a herd of sable, which

are quite rare in South Africa, but the Northern part of Botswana has a healthy population.

Criss-crossing between the River Road and the inland routes, our guide suddenly stops. "There was a leopard kill here yesterday". I strain my eyes and peek under every bush, but there's no trace of the spotted predator.

Our guide, however, refuses to give up. "He's here, I can feel it." He looks around for a while and suddenly shouts in triumph. "See that bush over there?" he says while pointing towards a piece of greenery nearby. I strain my eyes again, and then something stirs! All of a sudden I'm looking into a pair of cold blue eyes staring right back at us.

The afternoon boat ride is a long languid cruise on the Chobe River. It gives you another perspective to game viewing than taking a game drive.

We get face to face with a few Dagha Boy buffalo



bulls grazing in the water. The highlight of the afternoon, however, is seeing two elephant bulls trying to cross the river. Feet are placed tentatively in the water to test the temperature. Five minutes of "should I, shouldn't I" ensue. And then they're off, wading through the shallows until they start to tread water in a sort of bobbing motion. Eventually, the tip of their trunks is the only thing poking out of the water. Picture Khulubuse Zuma trying to do a

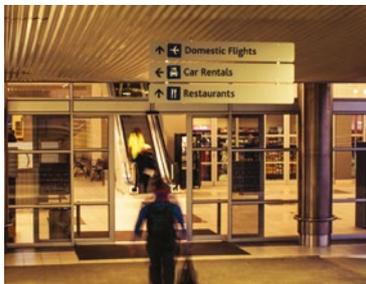
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butterfly stroke with a snorkel and you'll get the idea.

Further down the river, on Sedudu Island, that piece of earth that soured diplomatic relationships between Botswana and Namibia for years, we spot the African skimmer. Like a penguin, it looks quite lopsided on land. Its beak seems too big for its body, giving one the impression that it's going to topple over at any moment. However, when it takes to the water, gliding over the Chobe, it resembles a stealth fighter plane, with its lower mandible cutting through the river. With approximately 1000 breeding pairs left in Southern Africa, it's a big treat seeing this rare bird.

Chobe will definitely see me again. And hopefully the school kids will be safely behind their desks again. ■

SHOULD YOU GO?

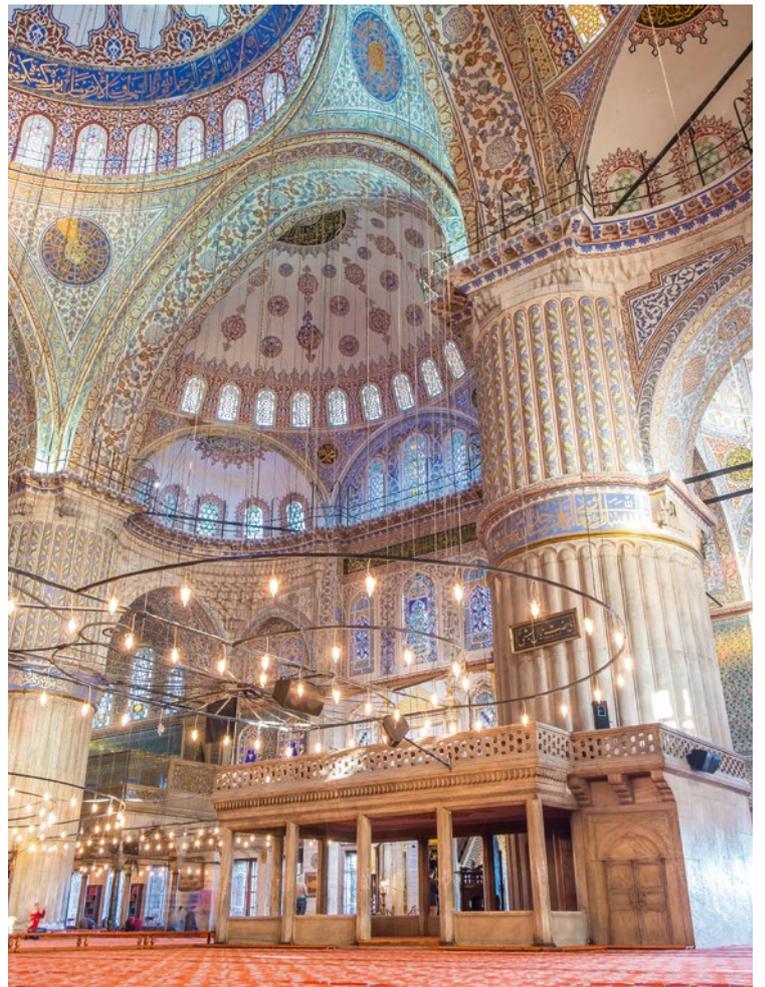
Best time to go: Chobe is one of Southern Africa's most accessible parks. It gets very busy during the South African school holidays. High season is between June and September, during the Northern Hemisphere's summer holidays. Accommodation prices can soar during this period. If your schedule allows it, try to visit it outside of these times.

Getting there: Chobe is an easy self-drive destination with tarred road all the way from Johannesburg into Kasane. Ngoma Safari Lodge mostly specialises in fly-in safaris but will make special arrangements if a self-drive party should wish to spoil themselves with a few nights of luxury after roughing it in the bush. South Africans do not need a visa when visiting Botswana.

Air Botswana has regular direct flights from Johannesburg to Kasane and flies to Cape Town to Kasane via Gaborone and Maun.

For more information on their flight schedules, visit www.airbotswana.co.bw or call +27 11 3903070/1/2/3"

Book here: Ngoma Safari Lodge is an Africa Albida property. For more information or to make a booking, visit their website (www.africaalbidatourism.com) or send an email to resweb@saf lodge.co.zw



TIME TRAVELLING IN *Turkey*

Turkey is a land built on time, from the ancient Greek ruins of Ephesus to the lavish Ottomans and the legacy of Ataturk. Dawn Jorgensen goes from 550BC to 2015 in 7 days.

Semsa Denizsel is a pioneer of the new Turkish food movement, something she confidently demonstrates at her restaurant Kantin in the upmarket Nisantasi district of Istanbul. Gathered here for dinner at a table brimming with freshly baked breads, cured meats, hand-sourced cheeses and Mediterranean fair, we were eating generous portions of goodness as she told us about her farm-to-table philosophy.

It was our first night on tour, a group of just on 30 travellers who would explore Turkey together, and we couldn't have been off to a better start. We came from at least 10 countries, varied ages and different interests, but we had one thing in common: We were about to get an insider perspective of Turkey with Trafalgar Tours.

Istanbul's history stretches back two millennia. The Topkapi Palace guards the treasures of a bygone era and the Bosphorus, the strait that divides Turkey between two continents, makes for incredible

river cruises. We did one, sipping on bubbly as we looked towards the crossroads of civilisation and the very bridge which connects east to west, Asia to Europe.

The minarets of Istanbul's great mosques pierce the skyline everywhere, with rolling domes dominating the cityscape. A highlight of the tour, and something worth your time, is the renowned Sultan Ahmed Mosque, fondly known as the Blue Mosque. It's named after the colour of its interior tiles and fascinating mixture of Byzantine and Islamic architecture.

The Hippodrome of Constantinople lies across the Blue Mosque. The open-air arena still shows traces of old horse-racing tracks.

Nearby is the magical sunken palace of the Basilica Cistern in Sultanahmet Square, once the water source for the entire city. The Hagia Sophia, regarded as one of the most architecturally perfect buildings in the whole world first started out as a church under Emperor Constantinople and was turned into a mosque under

the Ottoman Empire. Today it's a museum and its massive dome is tall enough to hold the Statue of Liberty. Here, I took the tour director's advice, stuck my finger in the Weeping Column in the northern aisle and made a wish. It would later come true.

SHOP 'TILL YOU DROP – TURKEY STYLE

No visit to Istanbul is complete without a shopping expedition to the expansive Grand Bazaar. And when you're ready for a break, go to the old Egyptian Spice Bazaar, or Misir Carsisi. It's just a short distance away and, lit by Turkish lamps, is both atmospheric and aromatic. We drank freshly squeezed pomegranate juice and snacked on mouth-watering Turkish street food: Borek, a Middle-Eastern pie made of phyllo pastry, and dolma, a stuffed vegetable dish.

For weary shoppers' bodies, booking a hammam or Turkish Bath is a must. I have never been scrubbed or soaked so clean – this ritual of health and wellness leaves no room for modesty.

Refreshed and relaxed we headed to the Dardanelles on the west end of the Sea of Marmara, a narrow strip of water that has been of great strategic significance since ancient times. Here, you find the Gallipoli Peninsula that saw one of the most disastrous campaigns of World War I in 1915. To commemorate the centenary, we visited Anzac Cove for a moving walk through the cemeteries with a battlefields expert. Touched by the significance of the location and the memory of the hundreds of thousands of lost lives, we quietly crossed to the picturesque town of Cannakale by ferry, where we spent the night.

CHANNELLING SOME BRAD PITT

Izmir is Turkey's main Mediterranean port and the Turkish headquarters for NATO; it is also the third largest city in the country. From here we visited Troy, where Homer's *Iliad* was lived out 3000 years ago. Discovered and excavated by German historian and archaeologist Heinrich Schlieman, the remains give you a good impression of how the ancient Greeks used to live. The replica Trojan Horse is a fun reminder of the legend, more recently depicted in the movie *Troy*, with Brad Pitt playing Achilles.

The site of Ephesus, about 16km outside of Izmir, is one of Europe's best-preserved ancient classical cities. Around the end of the first century BC, Ephesus had a population of over 300 000 people and was one of the main ports on the Aegean Coast. Then the sea receded

across the Menderes River plain, spelling disaster for the city. It was soon abandoned.

The exodus meant that it was left largely untouched and today you can experience the magnificence of the Library of Celsus, Arcadian Way, with its columns that once led down to



the sea, and the Lower Agora with its 25 000-seat theatre carved into the rock.

But it's the resident cats that have made the ancient ruins their home that will steal your heart. Most are up for a head scratch, a tummy rub and a quick photo. And with Ephesus as

a backdrop, they're some of the most photogenic felines in the world.

TRADITIONALLY TURKISH

Another culinary highlight of our trip was the Be My Guest-experience that we had in Demircidere, a tiny village just outside of Izmir. Here split into groups of four, we were taken to private homes and hosted in a traditional Turkish style. The granny of the family, despite being bent with age, took great pride in preparing the food. I didn't understand a word, yet the joy of the moment became our common language.

Returning to Istanbul and almost on my way back home, I couldn't help but reflect on the Turkish nation with fondness. There's a sense of ownership of language and culture, a deeply embedded pride among the Turks. Here is a Muslim country with Raki, an anise flavoured alcoholic beverage as it's national drink. Turkish delight is much more than a sweet treat, it's a conviction, and their coffee can sit proudly

with the world's best.

I left feeling teased by Turkey's offerings, wanting to return for more, and enriched by the unique insider experiences and the new friends I shared it with, including the wonderful Semsä of Kantin Restaurant.

TURKEY WITH TRAFALGAR

Trafalgar guided holidays breaks down barriers and offers hidden journeys and personal insight into the Turkish culture through their tour directors and local specialists.

You'll dine with local families in their homes, learn to cook regional dishes, and share a glass or two with winemakers at their vineyards, giving you a deeper understanding of the Turkish lifestyle and history.

Turkish Airlines has daily direct flights into Istanbul from Cape Town and Johannesburg. The airline serves tasty Mediterranean-style food, offers good on-board entertainment and even welcomes you on board with a sweet treat of Turkish delight. It's a lovely touch.
www.turkishairlines.com

To book a Trafalgar holiday, contact your ASATA travel agent or call Trafalgar on (011) 280 8440. For more information, go to www.trafalgar.com

You can also follow them at Trafalgar Travel on Facebook and @TrafalgarSA on Twitter.



5 TRAVEL INDUSTRY TRENDS

WTM Africa, one of Africa's leading trade shows, is an important indicator of the trends destination marketing organisations should be noticing. Carla Lewis-Balden was there, and found five trends emphasised at the show. Ignore them at your peril.



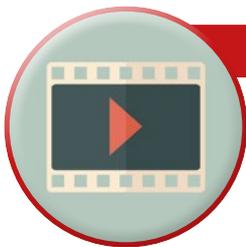
WORD OF MOUTH IS BECOMING 'WORD OF MOUSE'

If your property or destination hasn't invested in Wi-Fi, do it now. The 'braggie' is the new selfie and tourists can't wait to share images of their lurid cocktails or amazing views with friends back home. Destination marketing organisations (DMO's) need to capitalise on this and free Wi-Fi for guests is one of the best ways to market your product.

"With the rise of the electronic era in the 21st century, trusted word of mouth by friends and family has become 'word of mouse'. Friends and family share their recommendations across user-review websites, blogs and social media platforms," says Mariette Du Toit-Hembold, CEO of Destinate, one of South Africa's leading destination and tourism marketing agencies.

"Mobile and online technology is transforming the tourism landscape. Social networks have become virtual shop windows. Regular consumers like you and I can share our favourite things immediately, steering the buying preferences and behaviour of those around us who trust our opinions.

"Also, travel by millennials (ages 18 to 35) is on the rise and these connected savvy travellers are online influencers themselves. They gather information via travel websites, blogs, online reviews and social media while inspiring their peers and parents to travel beyond the obvious and dated destinations."



INVESTING IN MULTIMEDIA IS KEY

Vlogging may sound like a kinky S&M activity, but currently it is one of the most important trends in destination marketing. The word "vlogging" is a portmanteau of video and blogging, and companies are paying vloggers top dollar to feature their destination or property in their videos.

"It's a common trend at all international travel shows to see the focus on bloggers and video increasing," says Simon Lewis, owner of Travel Concept Solution, a company that helps DMO's connect with bloggers and social media influencers.

"Travel professionals and destination marketing organisations need to focus on quality content online. In Europe, video is already eclipsing writing as the medium of choice. We have some catching up to do in South Africa," he says.

Furthermore, travel brands need a presence on all media platforms – from websites to video, and social media channels, says Keith Jenkins, founder of the travel blog Velvet Escape and CEO of iambassador, the world's leading international travel blogger network.

"Travel content is multimedia by nature; in text, social media posts, photos and short videos. And bloggers generate valuable engagement with their readers through social media and the blog's comments section. This provides hosts and sponsors with a great opportunity to interact with the blogger's readers."



BLOGGING IS HERE TO STAY

Bloggers have a big influence on consumers' spending habits, according to a recent report by Nielsen, a company that studies consumer behaviour to determine trends.

When it comes to destination marketing and selling larger packages (such as tours and cruises), experts like travel bloggers are seen as knowledgeable, less biased contributors to the consumer's purchase decision.

That being said, bloggers and social media influencers should be carefully researched before you decide to work with them.

"Content from these sources should be high-quality and demographically targeted. Companies should consider carefully which bloggers and travel experts are best suited to target their prospective customers as part of a digital marketing campaign," the report warns.

Working with a blogger also differs from working with a traditional travel writer, says Keith.

"For a blogger trip, the general rule is 'less is best'. This means an itinerary that gives them enough time to explore on their own and find stories that are relevant for their niche and 'audience'.

One of the biggest benefits of working with bloggers is the social media exposure they can provide while on a trip, he adds. "Allowing bloggers sufficient time to share their experiences with their readers in real-time via social media ensures that hosts and sponsors benefit from the coverage. In this sense, providing Wi-Fi or data to a blogger is of utmost importance."



GREAT CONTENT COSTS MONEY

So, you want to invite an important blogger with a huge following to punt your property, but you're only willing to do a trade exchange for a few bed nights and a meal or two?

This approach may work for the so-called "bleggers", looking for the next freebie, but serious international bloggers are charging up to €500 a day to visit and promote a destination. If you want access to quality content and reputable influencers, you need to allocate money for it in your marketing budget.

"I often get asked: Why should I pay for a travel blogger when I can get a traditional journalist for free?" Simon says.

"DMO's and tourism companies need to see bloggers as self-employed publishers. You are paying to get access to their network and their influence to promote your product and destination. You wouldn't try to barter bed nights with a plumber or accountant. Why try to do it with social media influencers?" he asks.

According to Keith, bloggers can offer more value, both in the short and longer term.

"During a blogging trip, they share their experiences on their social media channels. And when they get home, the bloggers start to publish their blog posts and promote these via their social media channels. Many of them spread out their posts to ensure a good mix of content and topics on their blogs."



CONNECTING TO THE HEART IS STILL IMPORTANT

Even though travel is getting more digitised through social media, there is still a need for authentic, grassroots travel. "Travellers now dictate a more caring and committed culture. Their choices often depend on their impact on the world and local communities," Mariette says.

"Travellers want to experience the authentic daily life of locals; they want meaningful experiences and they want to see their money make a difference to the lives of people in the places they visit."

"Travel companies and DMO's should look towards creating cultural experiences and routes that the new kind of traveller will enjoy." ■

I ♥ PARIS IN THE SUBURBS



Most people head to Paris to tick off the major tourist attractions, like the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. **Carla Lewis-Balden** recommends staying in the suburbs to get a true feel for the city.

On my last visit to Paris, I stayed in two hotels. The first was a bland, generic chain a stone's throw from the Eiffel Tower. As it goes in real estate and when selecting a hotel, it's all about location, location, location. But I wasn't feeling the true soul of Paris between all the vendors peddling tacky souvenirs and restaurants selling crêpes plastered with Nutella for €5 to gullible tourists.

So I spent my last night at the Generator Paris, one of a new type of luxury hostels that are now to be referred to as 'flashpackers' and according to Condé Nast Traveller, Paris's coolest new hotel. It's located in the Colonel Fabien suburb in the 10th Arrondissement in Paris.

Think Williamsburg in New York, or our own Woodstock in Cape Town and Maboneng in Johannesburg, and you'll get an idea

of the type of crowd and establishments you can expect in this neighbourhood.

Colonel Fabien appeals to a new kind of traveller, the millennial. Millennials are travellers between the ages of 18 and 30 who are looking for unique experiences. For millennials, it's not just about ticking off the tourist attractions, but also immersing themselves in a destination. Millennials want to drink where the locals drink, bag a bargain at a hipster flea market and end off their day at some dive watching an obscure band.

The 10th Arrondissement is choc-a-bloc with these types of attractions.

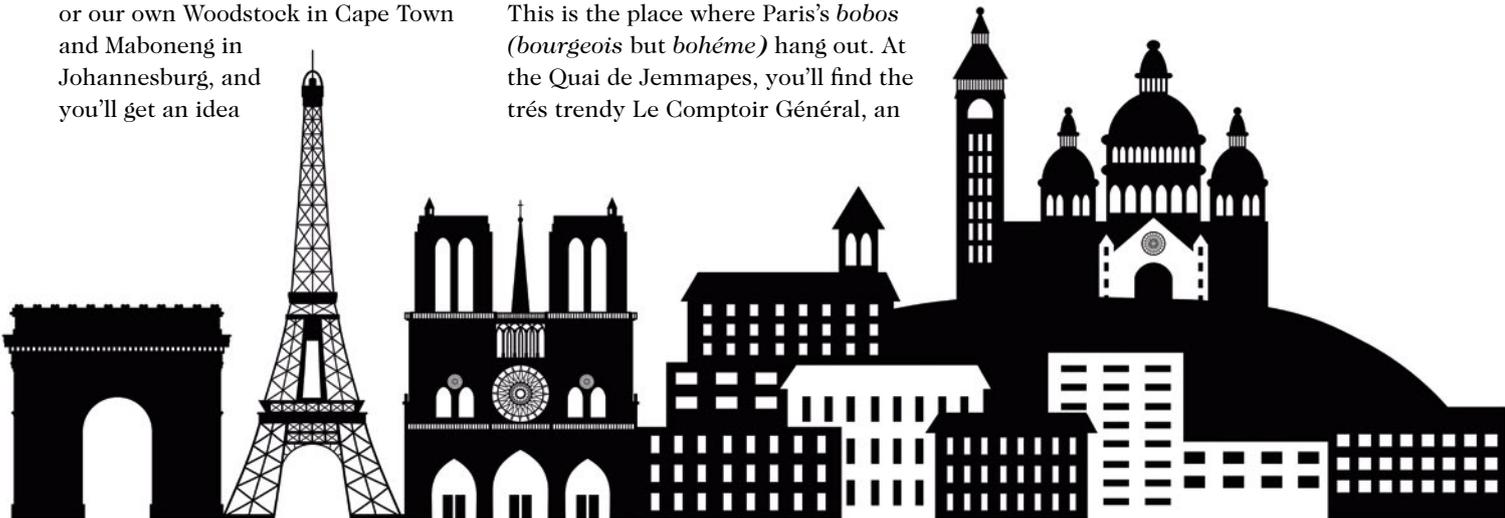
When you stroll down to the Canal Saint Martin, a Parisian water canal, it turns into hipster heaven. This is the place where Paris's *bobos* (*bourgeois* but *bohème*) hang out. At the Quai de Jemmapes, you'll find the très trendy Le Comptoir Général, an

easy-going, shabby chic bar, touched with colonial stylings. Here, hipsters and boho-chic types from all walks of Parisian life are all tumbled in together.

Then there is Le Point Éphémère, a bar and art venue housed in a former warehouse. If you want to see Paris's up and coming music acts, this is the place to go.

LE CHIC AFRIQUE

For an ethnic outing, take the metro from Colonel Fabien to Chateau Rouge to get a taste of African ex-pat life. Few tourists venture into this area, but it's just a hop, skip and a jump from the Sacre Coeur in the touristy Montmartre area. If you're looking for fluffy couscous and a rich



tagine, the Chateau Rouge area will not disappoint.

There's a strong North African presence here, and the prices of the bistros and restaurants are also softer on your pocket than those in the lower digit arrondissements.

The best thing, however, about Chateau Rouge is the people watching. Here you will find the *sapeurs*, Congolese gentleman that combine haute couture Parisian fashion with a twist of African swag. Ladies float by in boubous made from wax cloth, colourful and exotic as tropical birds amid the classical European architecture.

Ask anyone for a recommendation and the chances are good they'll send you to Les Trois Frères, an Algerian restaurant. They make a mean steak and chips (or as the French call it *steak-frites*) for under €10. Yelp-

reviews also proclaim that they make the best couscous in all of Paris.

SANCTUARY OF SOUND

The crowning glory of Paris's suburbs is the newly built Philharmonie, an architectural flight of fantasy designed by architectural rock star Jean Nouvel. Nouvel also conceived the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris and the extension of the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, Spain. Described as a "temple of sound", the Philharmonie is on the edge of the Parc de la Villette, in the 19th Arrondissement.

Many Parisians are upset that they need to schlep out all the way to the 19th arrondissement to watch a classical music concert.

But Laurent Bayle, the Philharmonie's president,

maintains that it is an important project to bring much-needed tourism Euros to one of Paris's poorer areas. The tickets to the concerts here are also much cheaper – weekend family shows cost between €10 and €15.

The aim of the Philharmonie is to democratise classical music, exposing people of the working class to Chopin, Debussy and Bizet, Bayle explains.

"We want to change the way people think about music in their leisure time," Marie-Hélène Serra, who leads the Philharmonie's educational program, said to the *New York Times*. The idea is that you can attend a rehearsal, stay for lunch after the concert and talk about it at a special discussion afterward. "We think we have to give people access to classical music very early in life," Serra said. ■

NAVIGATING THE SUBURBS

As a rule of thumb, the lower the arrondissement's digit, the higher the price in real estate. Paris's 20 arrondissements are arranged in the form of a clockwise spiral, starting from the middle of the city, with the first on the Right Bank (north bank) of the Seine. To save money, try looking for accommodation in Colonel Fabien and the Canal Saint Martin area.

The Generator Hotel in Colonel Fabien offers affordable and chic accommodation for travellers on a budget. Visit generatorhostels.com for more information.

Looking for a more authentic Parisian experience? You can rent a loft apartment on Airbnb looking over the Canal Saint Martin for less than €100 per day. Visit www.airbnb.com for more information. Forget about taxis, ride the metro like a true Parisian. It's cheap, easy to navigate and gives you access to all of Paris's tourist attractions.

As with most big cities, be aware of your surroundings when visiting Chateau Rouge. The locals aren't too keen on having their photos taken, especially the Islamic residents. Ask before you snap. For more information visit int.rendezvousenfrance.com, send an email to info.za@atout-france.fr or call + 27 (0)10 205 0201



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That's the average amount of money that a tourist on an African safari spends per day, according to a report from the United Nations World Tourism organisation. The report also found that wildlife watching tours generally include six people and lasts for about 10 days. An additional \$55 is usually spent on purchases per person per day.



CPT TO JHB IN SECONDS

Travelstart, South Africa's leading travel booking site, has a new app that makes it easier for travellers to book a flight between Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Called Flapp, it allows travellers to book and pay for flights between the two cities in seconds. "Flapp heralds a new and easy way for passengers to book their commute between Johannesburg and Cape Town," said company spokesman Russell Jarvis. "As more carriers take off, the local airline industry is seeing a shift in power back into the hands of travellers.

"Passengers' purchasing behaviours have evolved and Flapp is a direct response to this evolution, offering a rewarding and niche tool for today's traveller."

The 2-hour skyway between Johannesburg and Cape Town is one of the busiest routes in the world, and Flapp is designed to satisfy the individual needs of the specific group of travellers who fly this route regularly. By distilling all airline content into one mobile app, Flapp offers customers a smooth and secure booking and payment system.

The app is compatible with Android and iOS and available to download for free from the Google Play Store and Apple's App Store.



WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

"A very good way of getting people to go to destinations which have suffered at the hands of terrorists is to cut prices," says Simon Calder, travel editor of *The Independent*.

"It does seem to lure the British back and I don't say that at all disparagingly. We can make a cost-risk analysis." "As long as we know the risks, that's a reasonable thing to do," says Yeganeh Morakabati, an expert in risk and tourism at Bournemouth University.

"Look at it as a mathematical equation. Sometimes the attractiveness of a destination is higher than the level of risk." A 2003 study found that more experienced travellers, in search of exotic experiences, were more likely to dismiss the risk of terrorism. The Wall Street Journal reported in 2010 that the chance of a Westerner being killed by a terrorist was about one in three million every year, the same as an American's odds of being killed by a tornado. The think tank Global Research found that, in 2011, US citizens were nine times more likely to have been killed by a police officer than a terrorist. Source: BBC News

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ZIMBALI

You don't have to travel to an Indian Ocean island to experience the resort life. Carla Lewis-Balden lived it up at Fairmont Zimbali luxury resort and hotel.

I have a love/hate relationship with resorts. The great thing about them is that you have everything you need to your disposal within their manicured borders. But after day three, I invariably tend to get cabin fever.

Luckily, the Fairmont Zimbali Resort is located in an exclusive coastal estate with the same name. When you start getting a bit claustrophobic, you can always don your running shoes and go for a jog in the forest or over the golf course. But if you're content with drinking Pina Colodas next to the lake-sized pools, well, that's fine as well.

SIZE DOES MATTER

In an era where hoteliers try to squeeze as many rooms into a building as possible, space is one of the biggest luxuries you can offer your guests. At Zimbali, even the deluxe rooms, which are the entry level rooms, start at 43 square metres. The bathtubs are huge as well. Two people can easily soak in one of them while watching the rolling waves of the Indian Ocean.

BUT IT'S ALSO ABOUT THE LITTLE THINGS

Zimbali's toiletries are supplied by Le Labo, a boutique fragrance house from

New York and the darling scent of the cool kids. I must admit, I couldn't help snatching a little bottle of Rose31 body lotion, Le Labo's signature scent, from the toiletry basket.

Every morning I got *The Times* delivered to my door, which I read on my balcony overlooking the ocean, sipping on a freshly brewed Americano from the in-room coffee machine. Now that's true luxury.

SUPER SPA

Sometimes a spa is just a spa, but not when it's the Willow Stream Spa at Zimbali. The therapists are world class and the spa comes with some flourishes that will sooth the most frazzled soul. The spa has a range of complimentary artisan teas, exclusively blended for the Fairmont group. After your treatment there is also plenty to keep you in a Zen state of mind. A session in the dimly lit steam room is a welcome break from a constantly connected world that demands your attention.

GLOBAL FOOD

Get ready to pound the pavements in the resort. You'll need it after indulging at its many restaurants. The buffets at the Coral Tree are legendary. Come on a Friday and experience their Mozambican seafood spread or

Saturday for Indian Delight, the ideal place to sample a Durban curry.

If you're in the mood for something more festive during the day, try Ayoba, the Mexican restaurant next to the pool. Nothing says summer better than margaritas and mojito's with a bowl of delicious greasy nachos next to the pool (even if you're visiting during KwaZulu-Natal's very mild winter). If you're looking for something more sophisticated, OSA is the resort's fine dining restaurant, with a selection of Asian-inspired fushion dishes.

POSH POOL

One of the few things that count against Zimbali is its beach. It's not ideal for swimming, with dangerous currents and no lifeguard on duty. However, they've made up for it with the pools within the resort – you have five you can choose from. My favourite was the one that stretched right out in front of the hotel, framed by sun loungers. It's big enough to train for a triathlon, with a scenic backdrop of the resort's Balinese-Zulu-inspired architecture. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.fairmont.com/zimbali-resort/ for more information on their winter specials. To book, call +27 32 538 5000.



INTERCONTINENTAL OR TAMBO

The Tsogo Sun InterContinental Hotel at OR Tambo International was recently crowned the Best Airport Hotel in Africa in the Skytrax awards.

Carla Lewis-Balden stayed over to see what all the fuss is about.

Your first and last night at a destination usually demands a bit of frugality. Hotel choices are based on their proximity to the airport, as well as the value for money that they offer. And most people are looking to tick the 3 C's – clean, comfortable and cheap – when looking for an airport hotel.

But sometimes I wonder if it isn't worth the extra money to splurge a little and upgrade to a nicer hotel. If you're like most mortals, you're going to be spending 10 to 12 hours in economy class, engaging in an armrest tussle with your neighbour while a rambunctious toddler kicks the back-end of your chair. After all that torture, a little luxury may be worth it.

DECOR

Even though the decor at the Tsogo Sun InterContinental at OR Tambo International is quintessentially African, you won't get bombarded by tacky safari chic. Africa's influence runs like a subtle golden thread through the hotel. The restaurant, Quills, has an impressive art installation made out of porcupine quills that dangles over patrons' heads. Heavy, grand wooden chests that look like they could have

transported David Livingstone's equipment form focus pieces in the hotel rooms.

SMALL LUXURIES

Every room comes equipped with a Nespresso machine, so you can kick start your day with a freshly brewed espresso. In the cupboards, you will find thick terrycloth robes with matching slippers. The king-size beds are so huge you may just have to send out a team of explorers to locate your partner between the swathes of Egyptian cotton linen.

FAST, FREE WIFI

The hotel offers free WiFi to all its guests, should you want to update your Facebook page or chat with friends and family. However, if you want to stream a presentation, rather upgrade to their premium internet for an extra fee. It has twice the bandwidth of the standard service and is also recommended if you plan on streaming movies.

SPA AND POOL

You can swim all year round in the heated swimming pool, located on the top floor with a view over Kempton Park's central business district.

It may not be the Johannesburg

cityscape, but the sunset remains beautiful, especially in winter when the Highveld sun reflects off the Standard Bank building. If you're in transit, book a massage at the hotel's Camelot Spa. Their signature massage works wonders to get all those economy class knots ironed out of your spine.

RESTAURANT

The head chef at Quills restaurant is Leon Hatton-Jones, chairman of the South African Chef's Association. You can order five hamburgers at the O.R. Tambo food court for the price of one of Quill's entrees, but it's worth budgeting extra for one of Hatton-Jones's creations.

The restaurant specialises in international cuisine with an African twist. If you want to try some venison, this is probably one of the best places in Southern Africa to do so.

If you're taking guests back to the airport, kill two birds with one stone and have your farewell dinner at the restaurant. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To book, call 0861 447 744 or +27 11 461 9744 You can also visit Tsogo Sun's webpage www.tsogosun.com for more information.

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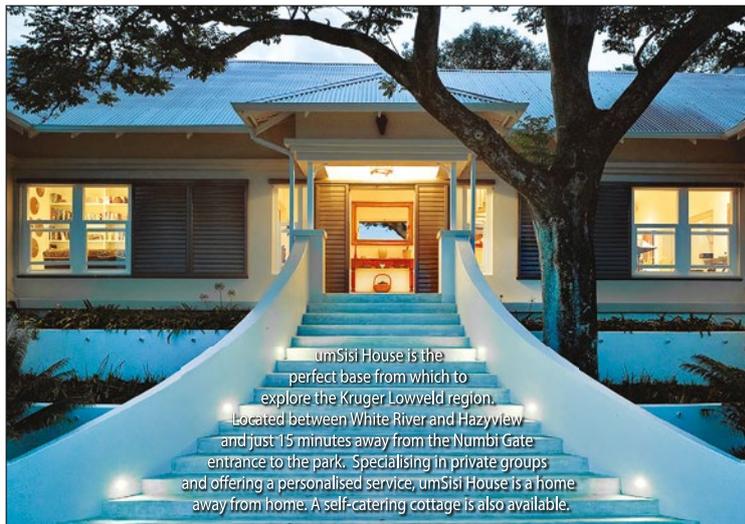
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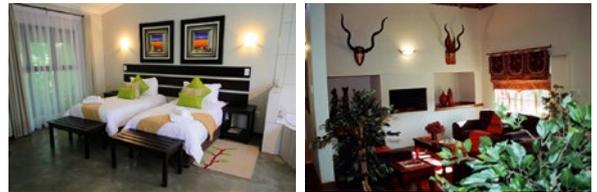
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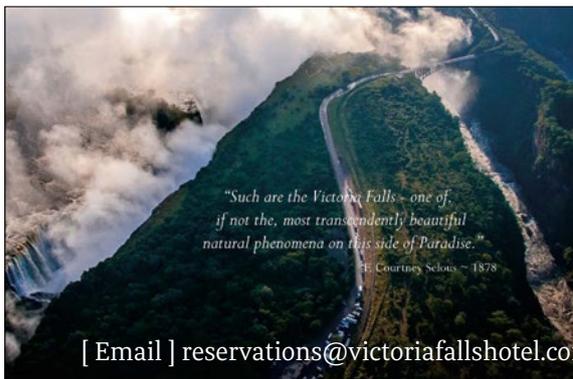
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Condor, is a German leisure airline based in Frankfurt. It is operating scheduled flights to holiday destinations in the Mediterranean, Asia, Africa, North America, South America and the Caribbean. Its main base is Frankfurt Airport from where most of the longhaul flights depart; secondary bases for Mediterranean flights are Munich Airport which also features long-haul flights, Hamburg Airport, Düsseldorf Airport, Stuttgart Airport and Berlin Schönefeld Airport. Condor will re-commence their flight schedule from Frankfurt-Cape Town return in September 2015.



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