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ISSUE 8

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MAG

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HEALTH TOURISM
DIGEST**
on the reverse

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How to be a
**RESPONSIBLE
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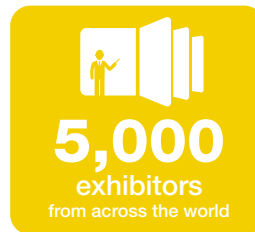


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There are only two kinds of people in the world in my mind: those who love winter and those who loathe it. There's no in-between, you're either a person of the snow or the sun. Well, sign me up for sunburn and dehydration on the idyllic beaches of the Seychelles (page 32); while one of our contributors cosies up next to a fireplace with gluhwein in one hand a cheese fondue-dipped piece of bread in the other, after a day on the French ski slopes (page 26). Luckily, winter in South Africa is almost behind us, soon enough it'll be time for a road trip through the Northern Cape's Namaqualand (page 22).

Learn what type of traveller you are in our Travel Trends feature (page 12) and read our Savvy Traveller article about how to be a responsible traveller no matter which season you prefer (page 18), as well as about the effects of El Niño and the drought on the local tourism industry in our Hot Topic feature (page 38). On page 40 we demystify working with social media influencers to boost your tourism business' reach to new audiences.

Also, as of this issue we'll be bringing you our quarterly Pan-African Health Tourism Digest, which can be found at the back of the magazine. Read about the rise of medical tourism on the continent and how South Africa is setting the example ahead of the Pan-African Health Tourism Congress next March.

Tweet (@travelupdatersa) or email us (editor@travelupdate.co.za) about your next holiday or destinations you'd like us to feature in future issues. The skies are open!






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Ishay Govender-Ypma

New York, page 15; France, page 26

Ishay is a freelance journalist, who wisely abandoned a career in commercial law in the pursuit of cultural immersion and air miles. Selected as a 2014 *Mail & Guardian* Top Young South African, she gathers stories, ingredients and second-hand books that threaten to take over the house.

“The best thing about travelling in winter is the unmistakable blue skies of the Free State and the Northern Cape, pleasant sunshine, crackling fireplaces and the chance to wear your pj’s under your coat. Because who’s to know!”



Lesley Stones

Pan-African Health Tourism Digest, pages 63 and 66

Lesley is proudly South African with a silly accent because she used to be English. She started her career by reviewing rock bands, then worked for various newspapers before spending four years in Cairo. Then she followed the sun to South Africa.

“As a former frozen Brit, I followed the sun to Africa. So I think summer is best enjoyed anywhere in Africa in a bikini. A pool, a cocktail and some wildlife too, please.”



Rachel Moncrieff-Robinson

The cost of drought, page 38

Rachel is a road-tripper, small town explorer, tree hugger, defender of frogs and avid supporter of local is lekker! Born in Zimbabwe and now living in Cape Town, her life’s mission is to encourage everyone to explore more of our beautiful continent.

“Kaapsehoop is the best local destination to explore in autumn because the trees lining the streets turn magnificent hues of red, orange and gold, while the resident wild horses can be seen kicking up their heels in the fallen leaves.”



Carla Lewis-Balden

Seychelles, page 32

This former *Travel Update* editor is now a full-time writer at Media24. When she’s not globetrotting, she’s penning blog posts for reismier.com, an Afrikaans travel blog she co-edits.

“I love Southern Europe in spring. The prices are still affordable, the crowds only arrive in summer and there is enough of a vibe, without getting trampled by the masses. And the weather is perfect.”



Nadia Krige

Responsible tourism, page 18

Nadia Krige is a freelance journalist based in Cape Town. Incurably curious, there’s nothing she loves more than a good story. And if it’s one that requires travel, all the better! She blogs about travel at slowdrive.co.za and gypsified.com.

“The Overberg is my favourite place in South Africa to explore during spring because it has a little bit of everything – mountains, sea, countryside charm, wine, wildlife and champagne air.”



Winter is coming to Europe and the best way to spend it is skiing by day in the French Alps and indulging in cheese fondue in front of a crackling fireplace by night. Ishay Govender-Ypma tells us how it’s done in our cover story on page 26.



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The **Panono 360° camera** features 36 cameras embedded in a ball-shape that trigger simultaneously to capture everything in every direction in a single shot that is automatically stitched to deliver high-resolution, full-spherical images. There are no blind spots or distortion caused by wide-angle lenses. It can be bought online at: www.shop.panono.com/#/en **from €1 499 (around R23 000).**

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The **Garmin fenix 3** is a GPS-enabled, multi-sport watch that tracks athletic performance and recovery time. Customise it with Smart Notifications and the Connect IQ App, which connects to the free online community where you can save, plan and share your activities through your computer or smart device, or compete against other users. Available from Due South (www.duesouth.co.za) and Cape Union Mart (www.capeunionmart.co.za) **from R10 999.**



OFF THE GRID

The solar-powered **Power Traveller Power Extreme** has a lithium polymer battery with an output of 3 watts. It weighs just 456g and is compact for travelling. You can charge a variety of smart devices using the USB port. The Gadget Shop also stocks a number of colours, www.thegadgetshop.co.za **(from R2 200).**



BREATHE EASY

The **EasyBreath** snorkelling mask from Tribord has a dual airflow system so water doesn't get through the snorkel even when submerged under water. The full-face mask allows for regular breathing through the nose or mouth and doesn't fog up. EasyBreath masks come in extra small to extra large sizes in blue, aquamarine and pink. Available online from www.tribord.co.uk (**£30, around R570**).
(Ed's note: I tried it out in the Seychelles and it works like a charm.)



LIGHT THE WAY

The **UltraTec Chameleon rechargeable headlamp** is great for camping or braaing with its 28-hour run time and rechargeable lithium battery that recharges in up to eight hours. Not only is it water resistant, but it has a cool-white and warm-white mode that also changes intensity. Available from The Gadget Shop, www.thegadgetshop.co.za (**R299**).



FINGERS FIRST

Nobiggi is a self-adhesive finger strap for smartphones, made from soft elastic fibre. It allows for one-handed use of smartphones and devices, as your thumb is able to reach further on the device's screen. Plus, it'll help you avoid dropping your device. Available from www.getnobiggi.com (**from \$14 or three for \$23, which includes shipping**).



LOCK IT UP

There's nothing worse than arriving at your destination to find that someone has broken into your luggage. Travel with peace of mind when you secure your luggage with this **heart-shaped novelty lock** from Typo. Buy one on www.typo.co.za (**from R70**).



TANGLE FREE

When you're on holiday, don't waste your time untangling cables. Keep them wrapped up and tangle-free with the small, medium or large **Bobino cord wrap** in a number of funky colours. Get yours from www.sgdistributors.co.za (**from R50**).



MEASURE UP

This compact **travel scale** (75x150x30mm) comes with a 1m tape measure so you never have to hold up the queue at check-in. It can take a maximum weight of 35kg and doesn't need batteries. Stocked by www.sgdistributors.co.za (**from R250**).

FLY AWAY

Flying long-haul can be exhausting, especially if there's a baby on board and you're sitting next to a bookworm who keeps the light on all night. Arrive at your destination rested with the **in-flight comfort set** from Typo. It includes a pair of socks, eye mask, compact toothbrush, ear plugs as well as a pen, all in a convenient bag. Available from www.typo.co.za (**from R200**).



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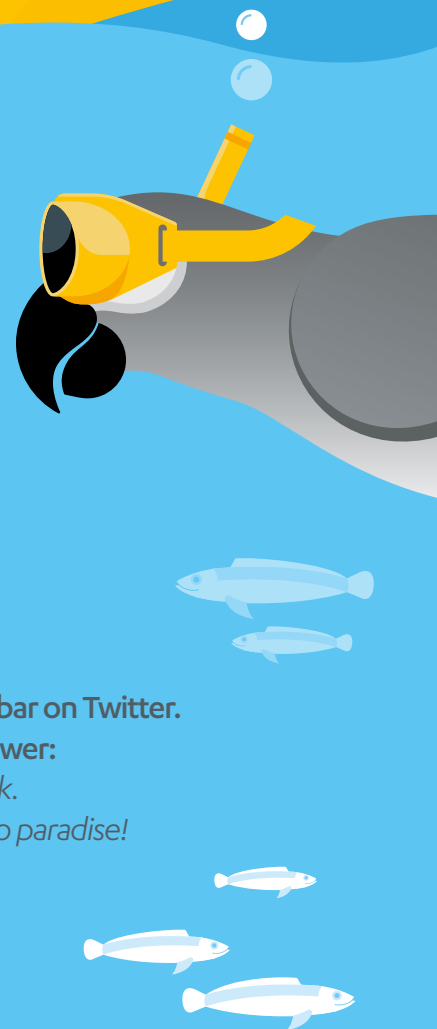
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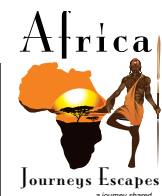
The Zanzibar Serena Hotel in the heart of Stone Town is a haven of tranquillity and opulence among the bustle of one of Africa's ancient and most enchanting towns. It's been styled to represent the epitome of Swahili style, ethnic elegance and Arabic opulence. This stunning property is flanked by an exotic mix of sultan's palaces, Portuguese forts, ancient dhow harbours and bright bazaars. It is set in two historic seafront buildings dating back to the 18th century that have been restored into a unique single property. All the bedrooms look out onto the golden beach and azure waters of the Indian Ocean that are dotted with dhows: www.serenahotels.com/serenazanzibar.



BLUEBAY BEACH RESORT AND SPA

This luxurious beachfront resort is situated on a 500-metre-long, white-sand beach on the east coast of Zanzibar. It's set in a 30-acre tropical garden with over 1 000 palm trees and is known for its excellent accommodation, fine dining and wine. The recreation and water sports centre helps guests organise a host of sports and leisure activities, otherwise parents can relax at Oasis Spa, while the kids are entertained at Toto Club. The resort also offers excellent facilities for meetings, conferences and group incentives, boasts a fully-equipped business centre as well as free Wi-Fi throughout the Resort: www.bluebayzanzibar.com

If you want to book a holiday like this to the spice island of Zanzibar, get in touch with Africa Journeys Escapes, which specialises in holidays to East Africa. Contact them on www.africa-journeys.com or info@africajourneys.co.ke, tel: +254-722-352-350 or +254-722-418-330 or +254-211-0780.



SO, WHAT KIND OF

No matter what kind of traveller you are – whether you travel to seek traipse the streets of Paris, Trafalgar has a selection of European

The Celebrator

Travel is the perfect way to celebrate any achievement or occasion – graduating, a birthday, honeymoon or wedding anniversary. Celebrators choose destinations that leave memories for years to come and will make for great photographs to add to their album of life. They'll most likely choose a country like Iceland, where they can experience spectacular glaciers, lava formations, exploding geysers and fjords. On the Northern Lights of Iceland guided holiday travellers will be treated to Insider Experiences such as the Be My Guest dinner during a private visit at the Viking World Museum.



1



2

The City Slicker

If spending a week as a city slicker in three of Europe's most exciting cities sounds like your ideal holiday then travel to Paris, Rome and London with Trafalgar's Explorer trips. You simply need to choose if you want Westminster Abbey as the backdrop for your new profile picture or the Champs-Élysées as you shop 'til you drop along its many boutique and flagship stores. Then there's hopping from one museum to the next and indulging in the local fare at a pavement side restaurant. Otherwise, grab your friends and get set for a cultural overload as you uncover the secrets of the ancient Romans in the Colosseum and the Catacombs.

The Family Traveller

Who doesn't want to enjoy the magical fairytale of a traditional, white Christmas? Treat the family to an atmospheric European winter with gluhwein, roasted chestnuts and twirled pretzels, partaking in the traditions of a real northern hemisphere winter with a dash of snow. Trafalgar's Christmas Markets trip is an excellent way to spend quality time with family during the festive season in the midst of outstanding markets in Austria, Germany and Switzerland that bring the iconic sights and seasonal delights of Christmas to life.



3

4



The Authentic Traveller

Much like the French who have the right to call it champagne, only port made in Portugal deserves the name. Get more than simply a taste of a country with Trafalgar's Regional Explorer, where local insiders will take you to all the must-see sights and also introduce you to local families you can dine with for an authentic travel experience. The Spain, Morocco and Portugal guided holiday allows you to uncover the history and mystery of the Hieronymite Monastery with a local specialist, plus more.

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TRAVELLER ARE YOU?

out that adrenaline rush, to explore the world's natural beauty or to guided holidays to suit your travelling style.

The Pilgrim

If you've always wanted to walk in the footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land, stand in the shadow of the Wailing Wall or view Moses' Promised Land then Trafalgar's Best of Israel country explorer is the perfect place to start. You'll be overcome with a sense of awe as you explore Jerusalem and step into the room where the Last Supper took place. Watch as Nazareth comes to life and float in the Dead Sea. Travelling in a group of like-minded people on a pilgrimage to one of the holiest sites for Christians and Jews is made easy and hassle free with Trafalgar.

5



6

The Do-it-all Traveller

If you're a first-time traveller, who wants to see and do as much as you can to give you a better idea of the places you'd like to visit on your next holiday, then a Trafalgar Discovery trip should be on the cards. You'll effortlessly go from one country to next, while taking in the iconic sights of Europe. Trafalgar's flexible leaving and joining options gives South African travellers the option to skip London (and the extra cost of a UK visa plus accommodation) by starting their trip in Europe. On the European Whirl, travellers visit nine central European countries in 12 days.



7

The Social Traveller

A large number of South Africans can trace their heritage back to Europe and the United Kingdom through migration, colonisation or job opportunities. Visit your northern cousins, aunts and uncles, but don't leave it at a whistle stop check-in. Trafalgar offers wonderful extension trips that give you a great way to make the most of a family holiday. The Real Britain trip is a six-day round trip of Scotland, Wales, and England, which offers cityscapes and scenic lakes from London through to York, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Cardiff.



8

The Spontaneous Traveller

Perhaps you're the type of traveller that always has a bag packed ready for the next trip and the pet sitter on speed dial. It's not always easy being a spontaneous traveller, but when Trafalgar has incredible weekly specials like Italy Bellissimo to the sun-soaked Isle of Capri where you'll explore the kaleidoscope of colours, fragrances and tastes that this boot-shaped country is renowned for, how can you resist? Especially when you can save up to 20% per person on weekly specials.



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NEW YORK CITY

There's no time to waste in the city that never sleeps. **Ishay Govender-Ypma (@IshayGovender)** suggests how to explore NYC like a local.

Must see

Springtime in New York City is particularly delightful, when the parks are bright with new grass and blossoms. And whether you're a first-time visitor to the city that never sleeps, or a regular, its iconic landmarks never tire. The best ones, like the **Statue of Liberty**, offer an interesting perspectives of the city. A pilgrimage to what's long been a symbol of hope, freedom and opportunity, the Statue of Liberty delivers on many levels – you'll enjoy remarkable views of Manhattan and of the statue from the water as you make your way there by ferry.

Once on Ellis Island, the museum provides a wealth of insights into the lives of more than 12 million immigrants to the USA between 1892 and 1954, and the viewing deck from the pedestal and crown is unforgettable. Tickets to these are limited and it's best to book online in advance. The wait to board the ferry can take hours, though: www.statuecruises.com/statue-liberty-and-ellis-island-tickets.

The Top of the Rock Observation Deck in the Rockefeller Center trumps the Empire State Building

and actually provides a great view of it. Tickets are timed so you don't have to wait endlessly. Book yours online and walk to the upper platform for panoramic views over Central Park and the Chrysler building. Sunset is a good time to visit as it only closes at 11pm.

For more information, visit www.topoftherocknyc.com.

You can spend a week visiting the museums and galleries scattered across the city and you still won't see them all. Take an exceptional free guided tour at **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, it's certainly worth the \$25 entrance fee. The rooftop bar offers a place to relax among interesting exhibits and wonderful views across the city. For a schedule of tours, go to www.metmuseum.org

Must do

Central Park is the green lung of

the city and Manhattanites use it to exercise, socialise and play. Hire a small rowboat, go for a jog, watch baseball practice or hire a bicycle and ride around the park. Bikes can be returned conveniently at various points around the city (www.citibikenyc.com). Stroll along the **Brooklyn Bridge** and picnic with the locals at the **Brooklyn Bridge Park** or grab a "pie" – a pizza at legendary **Grimaldi's** or **Juliana** next door (www.grimaldis-pizza.com; www.julianaspizza.com). Explore the artsy **West Village** on a food tour that's been wildly popular for the past 17 years: www.foodsofny.com/greenwichvillage. Think mom-and-pop stores, cheese, seafood, pasta, cannolis and warm cookies. Sampling a range of cuisine is a great way to understand and appreciate the fabric of New York society. 



Everyone dreams of hailing a yellow cab when they visit New York City. But put on a pair of comfortable shoes and walk the streets – you'll discover more and avoid the inevitable frustration of being stuck in traffic.



JOHANNESBURG

Egoli, the city of gold, Jozi, Joeys, whatever you call Johannesburg, know that you'll have to plan a return trip before you leave. **By Iga Motylska (@igamotylska)**

Must See

Visit Africa's tallest skyscraper for only R15. From the fiftieth floor of the 223-metre-high **Carlton Centre** (open daily from 9am), you'll see the grid-iron city laid out before you, fringed with greenery. From here you can map out all the places you'll visit next.

If you're after an adrenaline rush then head to the **Orlando Towers** in Soweto for bungee jumping, SCAD free-falling, swinging, abseiling, rock climbing and paint balling. Pop over to **Sakhumzi** on the famous Vilakazi Street for a finger-licking shisa nyama of meat prepared the real kasi way. Stay on to visit former President **Nelson Mandela** and Archbishop **Desmond Tutu's** houses, as well as the **Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum**. As the afternoon sun arches its way towards the horizon, enjoy the last moments of sunshine as you row a boat along **Zoo Lake** in between wading ducks and geese, or stroll around the public park. Get your face painted as you indulge in dinner and drinks to the sounds of African drum beats at **Moyo Restaurant** that overlooks Zoo Lake.

The next day, breakfast in **Cullinan village** near Pretoria before donning

a hard hat as you descend into the depths of the diamond mine where one of the world's largest diamonds was discovered. Later have a lunch at **44 Stanley Avenue** in Milpark. This al fresco lifestyle centre is made up of restaurants, speciality stores, galleries and design studios. Then read a book and watch the sunset from a height of 1 807 metres at **Northcliff Ridge Ecopark**. Bring your choice of bubbles and snacks as the streets below you light up, while the Magaliesberg Mountains fall into shadow. Behind you, Joburg's skyline erupts in flickers.

Must Do

If you're looking to celebrate somewhere fancy, head to the newly-opened Edwardian-inspired **Gentleman's Arthouse Cocktail Bar** in Newtown. Here you'll be treated to a fine dining, five-course

taster menu plus cocktails served in antique glasses from the carved wooden bar. It's housed within a 1911 heritage building, which has been transformed from the days when it was a public bathhouse. On the green tiled walls hang artworks by William Kentridge. It's only open on Thursday evenings and seats 48, so be sure to make a reservation and bring along your credit card.

If you happen to find yourself in Johannesburg on a night other than a Thursday though – and you're looking for a night out – head to the **Potato Sheds** for an early-ish dinner (it's only 200 metres away from the Gentleman's Arthouse Cocktail Bar) followed by a play at the **Market Theatre** a few steps away, where actors like Dr John Kani – the godfather of South African theatre – made the auditorium roar with applause. 🍷



Tick off the most popular tourist attractions on the red hop-on, hop-off Joburg City Sightseeing Bus. With 12 stops along the route, make sure you start early. A second route makes its way through Soweto.

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RESPONSIBLE TOURISM 101

Many assumed responsible tourism initiatives to be nothing more than a passing trend, instead it has shown remarkable staying power, as more travellers take a mindful approach to their travels. **By Nadia Krige (@nadi_krige)**

Responsible tourism was considered to be a buzz phrase used to sell destinations, activities and travel products to a small, but affluent niche market. Nothing more than a trend, the cynics said. However, an ever-growing number of travellers are taking a more mindful approach to their travels.

Heidi van der Watt, board member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and founder of Better Tourism Africa and the African Responsible Tourism Awards, explains how travellers and tourism businesses can ensure they're doing it right.

What is responsible tourism?

Responsible tourism creates sustainable places to live and visit by taking care of local people and communities and their culture, protecting the natural environment and boosting the local economy.

"It entails tourism businesses and visitors, as well as destination management and marketing organisations, taking responsibility for the impact of tourism. It involves putting plans in place to reduce negative impacts, such as greenhouse gas emissions and enhance positive impacts, such as buying locally-grown vegetables," explains Van der Watt.

All types of tourism products and services can practice responsible tourism: a guest house can adjust its use of electricity by installing solar-powered geysers, a restaurant can compost their vegetable peels rather than throwing them out and visitors

can use public transport rather than a rental vehicle.

One of the factors underpinning responsible tourism is an awareness of the issues facing destinations and working towards improving them in a sustainable manner. For example, a guesthouse in a drought-stricken area should warn their guests about water restrictions and make adjustments to use this precious resource wisely, such as implementing water-saving shower heads and using grey water from the kitchen to water their garden.

Responsible versus sustainable tourism

Rather appropriately, Van der Watt explains the difference between responsible and sustainable tourism in terms of a journey: there is the destination we are heading towards and the route we are following to



“South Africa is particularly committed to this journey, with responsible tourism inscribed as one of the foundations of the National Tourism Act and its promotion being a focal point of the National Tourism Sector Strategy.”

reach it. Sustainable tourism is the idyllic destination that she describes as “a picture where everything is perfect. It’s where tourism protects our natural and cultural resources, where all hotels have solar-powered geysers or heat pumps, where all tourists choose the best type of establishment.”

And in order to get there? “We need to take responsible actions along every step of the way,” she says.

Fair Trade is an approach within responsible tourism management and is promoted by the certification body Fair Trade Tourism once all criteria have been met.

How South Africa is getting it right

South Africa is committed to this journey, with responsible tourism inscribed as one of the foundations



of the National Tourism Act. Its promotion is also a focal point of the National Tourism Sector Strategy.

Cape Town has shown a pioneering spirit in its responsible tourism practices since 2002, when the city hosted the first International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations. To this day, the resulting Cape Town Declaration remains a key reference for destination sustainability worldwide.

In 2004, responsible tourism was included as a founding principle of Cape Town's Tourism Development Framework, while in 2009 the City of Cape Town joined forces with its major tourism trade associations – FEDHASA, SATSA, SAACI and Cape

Town Tourism – to draw up and sign the Cape Town Responsible Tourism Charter. These five collaborators confirmed their dedication to seven destination priorities: water efficiency, energy efficiency, waste management, skills development, preferential procurement, social development and enterprise development.

The charter has since been extended to include the signatures of Cape Town's Big 7 attractions – Robben Island, Table Mountain Cableway, Kirstenbosch, V&A Waterfront, Groot Constantia, City Walk and Cape Point – as well as a range of smaller tourism businesses with responsible practices.

A responsible approach to tourism?

With changing markets, taking a responsible approach undoubtedly gives tourism businesses a competitive edge, says Van der Watt.

“As a tourism business, purchasing Fair Trade or organic products and recycling or going green are actions and expectations that are transferred to travel choices. On the other side of the coin, being a responsible traveller makes for better experiences. You get in touch with locals, eat tastier and healthier food and do your bit for the environment while travelling,” she concludes. It's a win-win situation.

How to practise responsible tourism



Responsible Tourism

Be a savvy consumer

Be environmentally friendly

Know your status

Blow your own trumpet

Tourism Businesses

Employ locals and invest in their upskilling. Buy Fair Trade and organic produce that is sourced locally.

Make guests aware of ways they can save water and electricity. Use LED lights, install a main light switch and water-saving shower heads. Use eco-friendly laundry products and refillable ceramic containers for amenities.

Know how much water and energy your business uses, how much waste it produces, and how much is spent on staff development.

Use social media to tell the good news stories about your responsible tourism actions. Get the local community involved.

Travellers

Buy locally-produced mementoes and pay fair prices to crafters and guides. Eat local food from privately-owned establishments rather than chains. Buy organic and Fair Trade produce.

Be aware of the laundry policy, switch off lights, TV and air-con when you leave your room. Shower rather than bath and don't leave the tap running.

Know the carbon footprint of your trip and learn how to offset it. Plant a tree through greenpop.org.

Tell friends about the eco-friendly places you've visited. Commend businesses for their actions when you write reviews on review websites.

How to be a responsible tourist

Tourism policy, legislation and strategy doesn't make responsible tourism any easier for the average traveller, which should be its goal. Luckily travellers can determine if the establishments they plan to visit comply with responsible tourism standards.

They can access the winners of the

“With changing markets, taking a responsible approach undoubtedly gives tourism businesses a competitive edge.”


responsible tourism category of the African and World Responsible Tourism Awards, and the Imvelo/Lilizela Awards via their online archives.

Travellers can visit the 'supporters' tab on wtmresponsibletourism.com to see which businesses worldwide have aligned themselves with responsible tourism. The same can be done by clicking on responsibletourism.co.za's 'showcase' tab and viewing its

Responsible Tourism Products page.

Finally, ecoatlas.co.za is an excellent tool for planning your trip. This unique search engine finds products and businesses committed to responsible tourism in different ways. The website makes use of informative icons to give a quick overview of which responsible criteria a given product ticks, including

water saving, energy saving, recycling, green design, eco cleaning and veg or vegan, to name a few.

The best way to ensure we reach our sustainable tourism destination, as Van der Watt puts it, is to make responsible choices as both travel businesses and travellers, by voting with your wallet. Your choice makes a difference. 

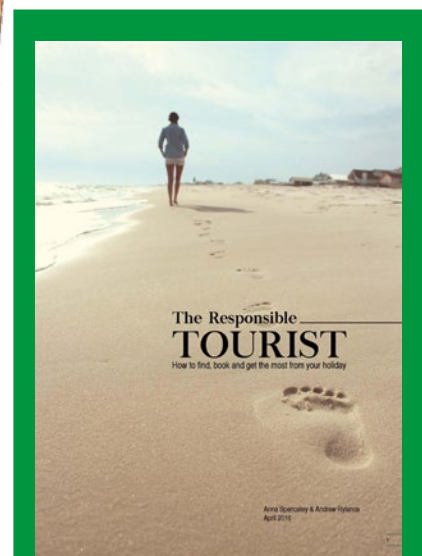
Top five SA responsible tourism businesses

- **Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, Gansbaai** – Both the nature reserve and its affiliate NGO (the Grootbos Foundation) have received numerous awards for poverty reduction, conservation, greening and community upliftment.
- **Hotel Verde** – Known as the 'greenest hotel in Africa', it offers guests a carbon neutral stay and is close to Cape Town International Airport.
- **Spier Wine Farm** - It won the Africa Responsible Tourism award for the accommodation establishment that practices responsible employment.
- **Xaus Lodge** - This community-owned, commercially-managed lodge in the South African part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park leads the way in using tourism as a means to beat poverty.
- **Bushman's Kloof Wilderness Reserve** – From San rock paintings to the fine art of rieldans, Bushman's Kloof is at the forefront of conserving South Africa's rich cultural heritage.

Biosphere Reserves in South Africa

These UNESCO-approved biospheres hold the key to solving a host of very real crises facing our world today – from water pollution to food security – by creating spaces where humans and nature are no longer separated. There are currently eight in South Africa, with a ninth in nomination phase:

- Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, Western Cape
- Cape West Coast, Western Cape
- Kruger to Canyons, Limpopo
- Waterberg, Limpopo
- Cape Winelands, Western Cape
- Vhembe, Limpopo
- Gouritz Cluster, Western Cape
- Magaliesberg, North West

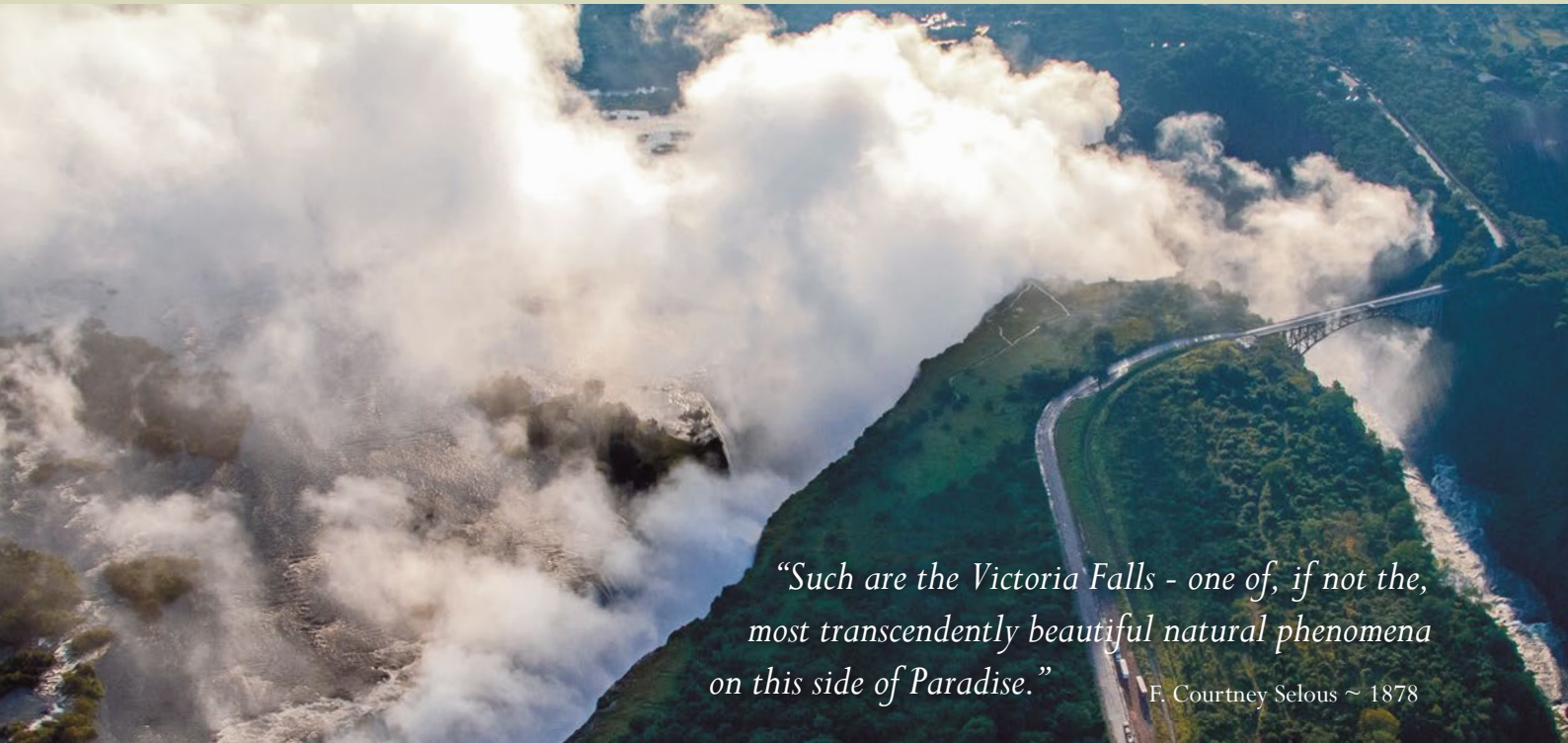


Read *The Responsible Tourist* by Dr Anna Spenceley and Andrew Rylance.

It is available for free download online via Slideshare: slideshare.net/AnnaSpenceley/the-responsibletourist



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NORTHERN CAPE

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Discover the splendour of the Northern Cape, which boasts five regions. There are many interesting stopovers and family-friendly activities in South Africa's largest province.

Experience a world of wilderness. Be one with Africa's animal kingdom out in the vast desert sands. Celebrate, dance and feast with the Bushmen. Gasp at the diamond studded night skies and listen to ancient wisdoms around dancing fires. Listen to the tales of Kimberley. Follow the old Anglo-Boer War trails. Wonder at the dreamscapes of flower fields in the springtime.

The Kokerboom Food and Wine Route

This route features towns of the Green Kalahari that include Keimoes, Kanoneiland, Kenhardt, Augrabies, Upington and Marchand. It offers experiences that'll appeal to families, adventurers and sports travellers. Highlights includes the impressive Augrabies Falls, the relaxing hot springs at Riemvasmaak, river rafting, fly fishing, kayaking and river cruises on the mighty Orange River. It's also the perfect place to take on 4x4 routes, go hiking and mountain biking or bird watching. Food fundis will be

delighted with the wide offering of typical Northern Cape fare and fruits at the many coffee shops, restaurants and road stalls along the route. Wine lovers can stock up at the wine and brandy estates in the region. *For more information, call +27(0)54-491-1325.*

Karoo Highlands Route

The Karoo Highlands Route in the south covers Nieuwoudtville, Calvinia, Williston, Sutherland, Fraserburg, Carnarvon, Loxton and Victoria. It's the Khoi and San people, who left their legacy in their rock art, that gave the Karoo its name. The route offers culture, adventure and incredible natural beauty through its many unique experiences, such as stargazing at the world's largest astronomical observatory at Sutherland, Carnarvon's Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescopes, Karoo architecture and corbelled houses, Anglo-Boer War sites, rock art, ancient palaeo surfaces, farm stays and Great Karoo cuisine featuring Karoo lamb. *For more information, call +27(0)23-571-1087.*

Namaqua Coastal Route

If you're looking for peace, tranquillity and a bit of adventure, take this route, which runs along the coast from Groen Rivier Mouth to Port Nolloth. Many of the roads along this route are not accessible to sedans but are suitable for 4x4 vehicles. If you're coming from the south the route starts in Kamiesberg and makes its way to Namaqua National Park. Your off-road tyres can take you to unrivalled views of dolphins and whales in the Atlantic Ocean or great vistas of mountains and veld brimming with wildlife. Each of the route's towns will welcome you with open arms and offer delicious local cuisine and their people will share stories as you explore shipwrecks or hike. *For more information, call +27(0)27-672-1752. or +27(0)27-672-1948.*

The Cape Namibia Route

This route meanders away from the N7 and includes small towns, each with its own local flavour and a story to tell. The N7 highway stretches from Cape Town and makes its way



through the Northern Cape before heading into neighbouring Namibia. While crossing from the Western Cape into the Northern Cape, travellers will encounter towns that capture the province's Nama heritage. Slow down and appreciate the unique stories of the people of Garies, Kamieskroon, Springbok and Steinkopf. The distinctive and enormous megalithic boulders carry the names of early Namakwa travellers and are aptly called The Letter Stones. During spring time, this route will take you into the heart of the floral kaleidoscope during the Namakwa floral season. *For more information, call +27(0)53-833-1434.*

Richtersveld Route

The Richtersveld is unique in so many ways and is the last refuge of the Nama people. In recognition of their vanishing lifestyle and of the rare botanical diversity it helps protect, the conservancy has been declared the core of the Richtersveld World Heritage Site – one of eight in South Africa. Journey 2 000 years into the past and make memories that will stay with you far into the future. The traditional culture of the inhabitants can be explored by visiting

these hospitable and friendly people. The !AiAis-Richtersveld National Park, which forms part of the route, is not to be missed. *For more information, call +27(0)82-335-1399 or +27(0)83-928-3571.*

Kalahari Red Dune Route

Extending to the north of Upington and all the way up to the Namibian border, the Kalahari Red Dune Route is a traveller's dream. Take your pick from experiences ranging from dune boarding, camel riding, 4x4 trailing, game drives, guided walks, birding expeditions and other eco-inclined activities for nature lovers. For visitors attuned to culture and history, the Kalahari Red Dune Route allows them to experience the regional customs and folklore of the Khomani San, sample traditional cuisine and to meet the warm and welcoming people of the Kalahari. This route is as diverse as its landscape. *For more information, call +27(0)82-492-3469. 📞*

For more information, visit www.experiencenortherncape.com or email: marketing@experiencenortherncape.com

NORTHERN CAPE HIGHLIGHTS

During August and September, the Northern west region of the Namakwa bursts into a magical kaleidoscope of colour with 4 000 species of spring flowers illuminating the barren plains. *For flower sighting updates, call the flower hotline on +27(0)79-294-7260.*

NAMAKWA'S FLORAL SPLENDOR

The Namakwa flowers are considered to be one of the world's botanical wonders with no fewer than 4 000 flower species, 1 000 of which are unique to the area. It's definitely not to be missed. And while you won't see it until your spring road trip, you can still enjoy the area's 250 bird species, 78 mammals species, as well as some 132 reptile and amphibian species, including exotic insects. *For more information, call +27(0)27-712-8035*

WITSAND KALAHARI NATURE RESERVE

With climatic anomalies that cause the Witsand Kalahari Nature Reserve's white sand dunes to roar between April and September, this natural attraction is one of the Northern Cape's best-kept secrets. Birders come here with hopes of spotting the reserve's 150 bird species, while animal lovers will delight in the abundant gemsbok, red hartebeest, springbok, duiker and steenbok herds. The entire reserve is open to hikers, bicycles and sand boards can be rented. The reserve guarantees an unusual and unforgettable experience. *For more information, call +27(0)83-234-7573.*



PLACES IN PIXELS: JAPAN

Japan is another country on *Lonely Planet's* must-see destinations list for 2016. Old and new appear side-by-side in this East Asian nation that's renowned for its geishas, Cherry Blossom Festival and sushi.

While there are around 2 970 shrines in Japan dedicated to the Buddhist deity Inari, the most visited one is Fushimi Inari-taisha in Kyoto. These shrines are characterised by their vermilion torii, which worshippers walk through to reach the temple.



The five-storied Chureito Pagoda is probably one of Japan's most easily recognisable landmarks. You'll need to climb 400 stairs to reach the temple, which looks over Fujiyoshida City and Mount Fuji.

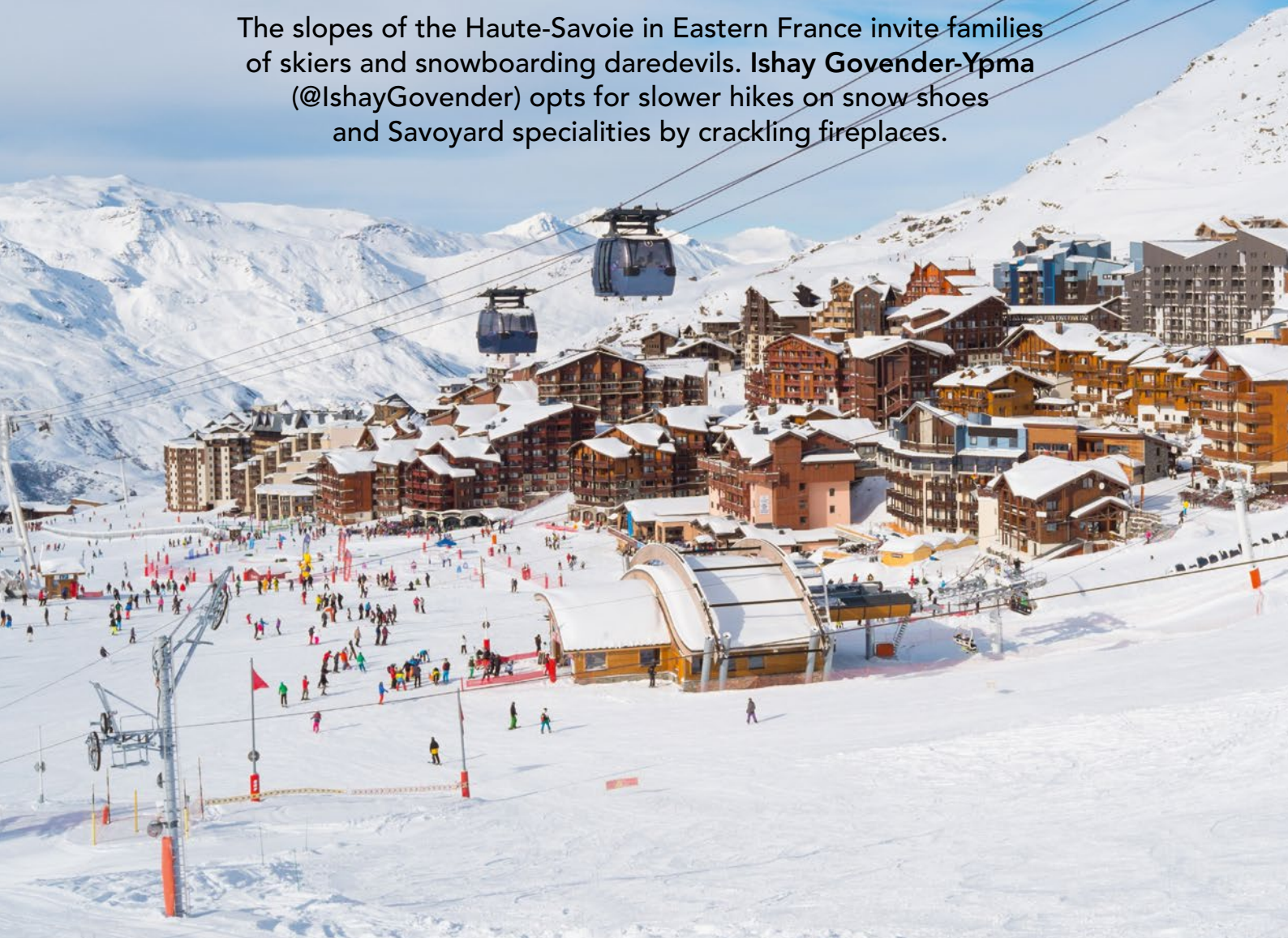


Tokyo is the world's most populous metropolitan area with around 13.5 million inhabitants, or 11% of the country's population. Keep an eye out for cosplayers as you walk along the congested Takeshita Street.



APRÈS-SKI

The slopes of the Haute-Savoie in Eastern France invite families of skiers and snowboarding daredevils. **Ishay Govender-Ypma** (@IshayGovender) opts for slower hikes on snow shoes and Savoyard specialties by crackling fireplaces.





It's in Megève, in the Rhône-Alps, that I experience a proper snowfall for the first time – fluttery, papery, ice-cold and delicious. For a moment it feels as though I'm inside a snow globe. Picture this: we're trying to find parking in the cordoned-off town centre and a thirty-something woman (that would be me) leaps out of the passenger seat, pirouetting with joy. A driver toots irritably. The flakes drift in slow motion, sifted from the grey-white sky, ethereal and feather-light, carpeting the rooftops and ground.

Previous end-of-year trips to Europe have never produced the white winter wonderland I have always dreamed about. But February, it turns out, is the ideal time to experience a fairy-tale winter. And by the looks of the ever-growing number of families lugging ski poles and toddling on ski shoes, high season is approaching.

The ski-resort town of Megève, made famous by the Rothschilds in the 1920s, sits in the shadow of Mont Blanc and while I've been lured here to the slopes, it's the promise of hearty French Alpine food that gets my heart racing. Après-ski, I learn, is more than just a cold beer or the local vin chaud (a warm mulled wine similar to glühwein) after a day of skiing.

Valley of Cheese

The Haute-Savoie in eastern France

borders Italy and Switzerland and is known for its crystal-clear lakes and verdant valleys, where cows graze on lush green grass in the warmer months. The unique terroir produces not only the distinctive crisp white Savoyard wines, but also a bounty of cheeses, like Tomme and the firm, sharp Comté and Beaufort.

And while neighbouring Switzerland has the global reputation for excellent fondue using hard-rind cheeses like Gruyère, that have been perfected by Swiss farmers, historians can't pinpoint where it originated. Geographically, it makes sense that the knowledge of cheese-making techniques was shared across borders. Needless to say, the Savoyard fondue is generally made by slowly melting the very fine French Alpine cheeses Comté and Beaufort with a little regional white wine, or water in some villages, in a caquelon pan, over which a clove of garlic has been rubbed.

Post-ski runs and adventuring are rewarded by dunking a basket of day-old bread chunks in fondue that is stirred with a small ladle over a flame until the last crusty cheese layer, known as the religieuse (nun) remains. At the core, it's a basic dish – cheese, bread and a splash of wine – but it's the communal act of swirling a fork with bread into a pot of melted cheese with someone else that elevates fondue to something special.

Cheese appears in many of the signature Savoyard specialities. Consider tartiflette, a dish of potato slices made with cream, crisp lardons and swaddled in Reblochon cheese. Brown on top and creamy inside, it's also made with thick disks of chèvre (goat's cheese). Before I travel to Megève, I start at Annecy, the capital of the region widely known as the Venice of the Alps for its canals and paint-box-coloured buildings. The rotating market is the perfect opportunity to meet local producers and purchase ingredients for a picnic. And since the ground is covered in snow, we opt for a bed picnic of bread, sausage, wine and cheese.

For lovers of cheese, there are ever-higher heights to aspire to. Take the knee-weakening cheese cart decked with layers of local varieties like the one at two-star Michelin Restaurant Yoann Conte in Veyrier-du-Lac, formerly the kitchen of beloved French chef Marc Veyrat. And then, at its simplest, there is warm, melted raclette. Semi-firm Raclette, a cow's milk cheese, is suspended from an electric metal contraption.

This, too, is post-snow-slopes food, and after an afternoon of snowshoeing in Megève, I order the raclette at L'Alpage, decorated like an Alpine mountain hut – all pale wood

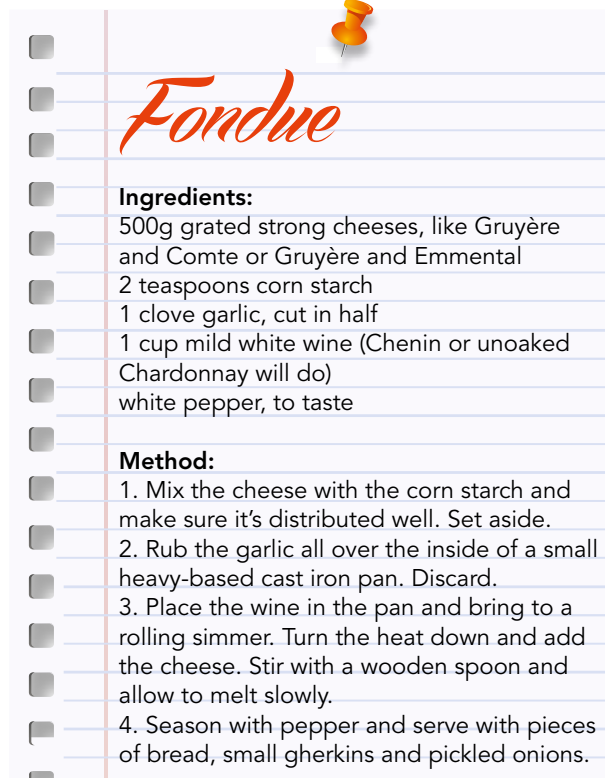
and soft, golden lighting. I manoeuvre the element closer to the cheese and scrape it, oozing in ribbons, with a metal spatula. This, we use to smother ingredients brought on an accompanying platter: bread, boiled fingerling potatoes, cornichons, charcuterie and pickled onions, until the wedge disappears.

The diners next to me, a family with two strappy teenage boys, cheeks ruddy from a day of adventure, grill thin slices of beef, veal and chicken on a pierrade (hot stone) at the table, as the smoke lifts in pleasant curls. I make a note to try it for dinner the following night.

Chocolate rescue in a mug

I spend the days

snowshoeing in the pristine Megève slopes. The skiers look at us and the Nordic skiers, with their skinny skis and determined strides, with amusement and just a little



SKI PROS MÈGEVE

Mike Beaudet or Megève Mike, as he's known, has an excellent reputation for English-speaking instruction in the area. He's assembled a great team that tutors children and adults in skiing and snowboarding and who can guide you on mountain hikes and snowshoeing treks in the area: Address: 192 Route du Téléphérique, Megève. Contact: mike@skiprosmegeve.com; www.skiprosmegeve.com.

TIP: You can hire skiing and snowshoeing equipment at resorts

and store it in lockers for a fee. It's best to go with your own clothes, socks, gaters and well-fit thermal wear, as they are pricey at most resort towns and in limited sizes in high season. Purchasing a week-long ski pass is much cheaper than a daily card.

Visas: South Africans need a Schengen visa for France, get a multi-entry Schengen if visiting Switzerland and Italy too. Visit: www.capago.eu.

Restaurants:

Yoann Conte is a two-star Michelin

restaurant in Veyrier-du-Lac, close to Annecy: www.yoann-conte.com/en/.

L'Alpage – Savoie specialities: www.feracheval-megeve.com.

Flocons de Sel – exquisite three-star Michelin fine dining in a modern set-up: www.floconsdesel.com/en/.

Flocons Village – sister restaurant of Flocons de Sel and a great bistro: www.floconsdesel.com/en/.

Le 1920 – sublime service and food from this two-star Michelin restaurant attached to a fine hotel, with a young chef at the helm. Try the full degustation menu: www.mont-darbois.fr.



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pity. But speed isn't for me and I want to take in the environment at leisure. It's fairly easy to snowshoe – you clip your hiking boots into the plastic “shoes” and walk a little wider than usual, placing the poles behind you at an angle as you move forward. Going uphill requires patience and leg strength, depending on the angle of the slope, but “if you can walk, you can snowshoe immediately,” says our guide Bruno.

Despite constant snow clearing, there are parts where it comes all the way up to our knees as we trudge forward, as though through treacle. Long gâters worn over ski pants become valuable here, as do sweat-resistant thermal body wear, a warm bandana that blocks the wind between your jacket and neck, as well as goggles.

On one particular day when we are snowshoeing without a guide, snow swirls thickly in the wind. It pummels my face and my goggles fog up constantly. I motion that we get to the nearest ski lift, at least 30 minutes away. It's another 20 minutes to the bottom when we get to the lift, but to the right, there's a flicker of hope – a mountain

restaurant that offers respite and large mugs of hot chocolate. Chocolat chaud à la viennoise, usually made from real dark chocolate and topped with Chantilly cream, is a boon for the cold and hungry. And the cosy ski restaurants usually serve all the local Savoyard specialities from tartiflette to fondue and rich, cheesy pastas. But today is the day for a stack of warm crêpes. While eaten all year round, none are as comforting as the crêpes swathed in melting Nutella eaten on the slopes.

We opt out of all strenuous activity the next day. Instead, we venture to the village of Leutaz and to Flocons de Sel, a three-star Michelin restaurant with a bright, contemporary dining room and a chef known for his skiing and foraging skills, who invites every guest into his kitchen after their meal. Much later, after a steam in the sauna, we sit near a roaring fire drinking crisp white wine and contemplate a summer time hike around Mont d'Arbois, knowing well that it would not hold the same appeal as a February wonderland of snowmen, powdery flakes and rich Savoyard meals. 

Summer in the French Alps

By French Tourism Board

The French Alps are an all-year-round destination and are not just popular in winter. The snow melts into the crystalline Alpine lakes that are encircled by forests and quaint villages. These turquoise mountain lakes are a central attraction in the warmer months, not only for their natural beauty, but also for the activity offerings. Visitors can choose between a number of adrenaline-inducing activities on the water, such as rowing, kayaking, canoeing, jet-skiing, motor-boating, water skiing, tubing and wakeboarding. The calm waters are also ideal for leisurely activities like stand up paddle boarding, yachting, sailing, kite surfing, fishing along the banks and even a day trip on a catamaran or pedalo.

Take your picnic basket – filled with regional treats from the village market – for your day on the water and in the sun. The French Alps are a natural obstacle course for hikers, trail runners and mountain bikers. Do a day hike to one of the many waterfalls, your resort will advise on the closest one or overnight at one of the many mountain ‘refuges’ cabins. While the forests are teeming with animals, the Alpine marmot gathers a lot of attention, especially among families with children. The best time to spot these furry creatures is when they eat, early in the morning and at sunset. A marmot trail has even been set up in the foothills of the Queyras in Eyglieres. Fly high over the mountains with speeds of up to 130km/h as you're strapped into a harness along the six Tyrolean traverses that reach up to 1 870m in length. Deploy a parachute on some for a more tranquil glide through the air. No matter which time of the year you visit,

adventure and spectacular mountain scenes await in the French Alps.



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Email info.za@atout-france.fr for more info on summer in the French Alps or visit www.gotomontblanc.com.



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The Seychelles are the haunts of the rich, royals and Russian oligarchs. For mere mortals like us, it may feel like one of those when-I-win-the-Lotto vacations. Like many bespoke destinations, the Seychelles believes in a high-cost but low-impact model and although it's not said out loud, I got the impression that the high prices are a way of controlling the crowds.

I'm always careful about lauding destinations with terms such as "most beautiful" or "best". Every destination has its own appeal, pros and cons, but in the Seychelles superlatives are tossed around with reckless abandon. This is the most beautiful island archipelago I've

visited. The beaches and sea were the same hue as in the brochures and I didn't need a Photoshop brush to saturate the colours. Here you can hashtag all your Instagram photos with #nofilter.

Friends who had visited the island warned me: "Stay away, it will ruin all tropical islands for you, for life." I'm afraid they were right.

The best beaches

Choosing a favourite beach in the Seychelles is like choosing your favourite child, it's almost impossible. You can't go wrong laying down your beach towel on the

SEYCHELLES:

SEA, SAND AND COCO DE MERS

Be careful when planning a trip to the Seychelles, writes Carla Lewis-Balden (@diereismier), it may just ruin you for life.



sugary white sand at any of the island's beaches. They're all public, so you can enjoy the ones in front of five-star resorts even if you aren't staying there.

Mahé Island

Beau Vallon

This is the party beach, although it's still sleepy and unspoiled when compared to party beaches on other tropical island destinations. Here, you'll find a vibey restaurant scene and beach resorts. It's also one of the few places in the Seychelles where motorised water sports are allowed.

Petite Anse and Anse Soleil

These two beaches, located right next to each other, could be gorgeous twin sisters. Petite Anse is the more glamorous one, flanked by a posh Four Seasons resort, while Anse Soleil, although just as pretty, offers more affordable accommodation.

Praslin Island

Anse Lazio

Travel bible *Lonely Planet* reckons this is the best beach on Praslin Island. The water is crystal turquoise, the depth is just right for swimming and there's more than enough



shade when you've had enough sun for the day. For lunch, visit the beach restaurant BonBon Plume, which serves delicious seafood curries (although you'll also be paying a premium for the location and view).

La Digue Island **Anse Source D'Argent**

Chances are that when you pick up a brochure about the Seychelles this beach will be on the cover, where the azure waters are framed by white beaches and coral pink granite rocks. It gets busy during the day and is best visited during high tide.

Happy hiking

The Seychelles is the perfect destination for active travellers. Best of all, most hiking trails are free and you don't need a permit.

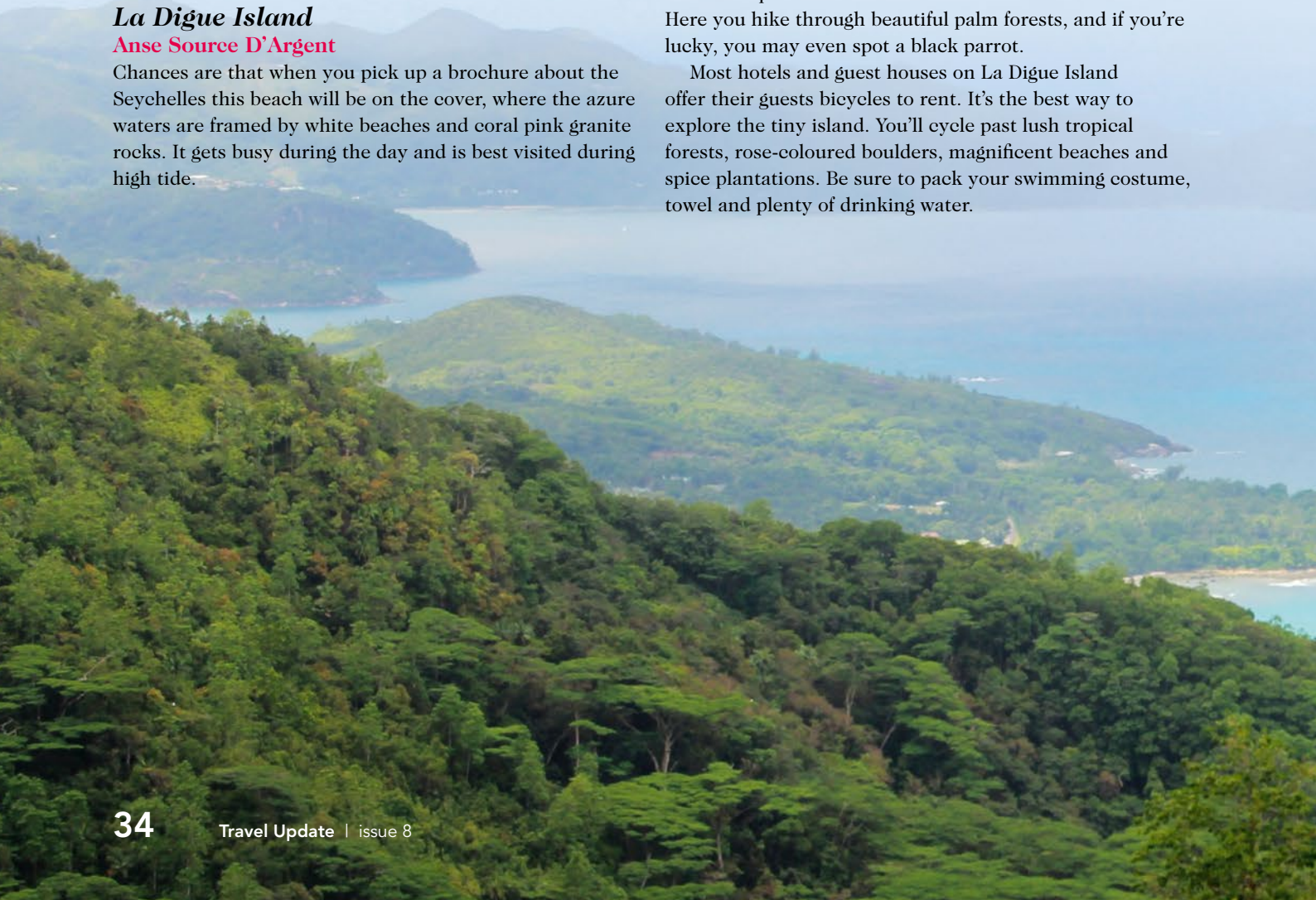
The Anse Major hiking trail in the northwestern part of Mahé Island leads to Anse Major beach, a deserted stretch of sand that can only be reached by foot. It's perfect for families and kids of all ages, and takes about an hour and a half to complete, minus the time spent swimming, of course. Remember to pack a picnic basket.

The challenging route from Val Riche to Copolia meanders through thick virgin forest and gives you a spectacular view of Mahé and its beaches. Best to leave the kids at the hotel for this one, unless you're fond of hearing "are we there yet?" on repeat. The route takes two hours.

The Port Glaud Waterfall trail takes an hour and a half and ends at a waterfall in the middle of the forests. If you're into plants, you'll love this route as flesh-eating pitcher plants can be found here.

The Seychellois are obsessed with the coco de mer, a giant nut that resembles a woman's – ahem – lady bits. When you arrive in the Seychelles, you get a coco de mer-shaped stamp in your passport. The best place to see the famed palms is at the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve. Here you hike through beautiful palm forests, and if you're lucky, you may even spot a black parrot.

Most hotels and guest houses on La Digue Island offer their guests bicycles to rent. It's the best way to explore the tiny island. You'll cycle past lush tropical forests, rose-coloured boulders, magnificent beaches and spice plantations. Be sure to pack your swimming costume, towel and plenty of drinking water.





Sample the local cuisine

I loved Seychellois food, which seems to be a fusion of Creole, Asian and French cuisine. If you want to try a delicious seafood curry, scout one of the many takeaway shops in each town. Don't expect fast food here though. These takeaways whip up delicious seafood curries and tiny deep-fried balls of dough, similar to the beignets that you get in southern states of America.

For a bit of indulgence, visit Bravo Restaurant on Eden Island. Their tuna kebabs are out of this world and the portions are huge. Their vegetarian fare is also impressive, considering that most meals are seafood based.

The Island Grill food truck in Victoria is a legend among locals looking for a yummy hamburger. A burger costs about 35 rupees (R42), which is a steal, says expat Brett Saunders, the owner of Bravo Restaurant.

You can buy Takamaka Bay, the local rum, at all general dealers and they also offer tours and rum tastings at their distillery. It's located about 18 kilometres east of Victoria (www.takamakabay.com).

The Wednesday night market in Beau Vallon is heaven for foodies on a budget. Here you can gorge yourself on Creole curries wrapped in chapatis.

Where to stay

Package tours

Travel companies offer value for money package tours to


properties on Beau Vallon Beach, one of the most popular beaches on Mahé Island. When staying on Praslin, the Berjaya Praslin Resort also offers excellent value for money. It's situated in the Côte d'Or on Praslin Island, where the liveliest parts of the island and the Anse Volbert beach is the fodder that postcards are made of. Visit www.thompsons.co.za or phone Thompsons Holidays at +27(0)11-770-7583 for more information.

Self-catering or B&B

The Seychelles is not only a resort destination. You can stay in a self-catering villa or B&B and explore the area. Praslin and Mahé islands have an efficient bus service that's safe and clean, while La Digue Island is perfect for exploring on bicycle.

Au Fond de Mer on Mahé is a cluster of villas and apartments overlooking Anse Royale beach and you're less than two minutes' walk from the beach. Each villa has a patio, complete with a daybed that will seduce you into drinking too many Cuba Libres, liberally spiked with Takamaka Bay rum. For more information on other self-catering properties, visit en.seyvillas.com.

Getting there

Air Seychelles flies directly from Johannesburg to Mahé and onwards to Paris, Abu Dhabi and Mumbai. The flight is five hours long and South Africans don't require a visa. 

GO BLUE

Sustainable holiday destinations are becoming increasingly popular, ones where you can relax with peace of mind knowing you're travelling responsibly. The Seychelles is one such destination. By Iga Motylska (@igamotylska)

If you're a responsible traveller, the kind who chooses a destination or tourism product based on responsible and sustainable tourism practices, the Seychelles ticks all the boxes.

This archipelago of 115 islands is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world. Forty seven percent of its landmass is protected nature reserves and marine parks. It is a sanctuary whose natural diversity is protected by conservation laws and is home to two UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites. The Seychelles is where you can find the jellyfish tree, Gardiner's frog, one of the world's smallest frog species, and the Coco de Mer – containing the world's largest seed. The islands have 13 species and 17 subspecies of birds that occur nowhere else in the world, like the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher and the rare Seychelles Black Parrot.

It's a sanctuary that's protected by various conservation laws that safeguard its natural diversity and protect its key tourism assets, especially as it's one of the most tourism-dependent countries in the world. In the Seychelles it's prohibited to touch corals and marine life, collect sea shells, seeds, rocks or pick flowers in nature reserves and marine parks, or to disturb or feed wild animals.

The island nation may seem small as it only covers 450km², but it's surrounded by 1.4 million km² of exclusive economic zone (EEZ). It embraces the blue economy concept, whereby economic growth is aligned to the responsible long-term management of the marine environment and resources, beaches and fisheries. It also supports efficient ports and maritime sea lanes, while trying to reduce sea level rise, ocean acidification, toxic

dumping and water pollution.


In September 2011 the Seychellois ministry of tourism established the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL) as part of its Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy, on the back of Vision 21. It's a voluntary points-based tourism management and certification programme to regulate mainstream sustainability practices in the hospitality industry by inspiring more efficient and sustainable ways of doing business within the sector.

It consists of 105 criteria – some of which are mandatory while others are voluntary – that are divided into eight categories: management, waste disposal, water usage, energy usage, staff, corporate social responsibility projects, conservation efforts as well as guest satisfaction. These criteria set standards and guide sustainability improvements in hotels. It also acknowledges that often, embracing sustainable practices are not just good for the environment, but good for the general ledger too in terms

of cutting business costs.

The SSTL also signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement with Fair Trade Tourism in July 2015, ensuring all SSTL-accredited establishments are also marketed under the Fair Trade Holiday brand that represents global best practice in the responsible tourism sector.

Furthermore, it has also applied for recognition with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) – a leading organisation that manages global sustainable standards with the aim of increasing sustainable tourism knowledge and practices among public and private stakeholders.

If you're planning a sustainable holiday in biodiversity paradise, visit the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label's website: www.sstl.sc 

“This archipelago of 115 islands is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world. 47% of its landmass is protected nature reserves and marine parks.”



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THE COST OF DROUGHT

South Africa has been hit with the worst drought in 30 years. Here's what it means for tourism and travellers. By Rachel Moncrieff-Robinson (@tipsygypsy_SA)

The effects of global warming and El Niño are being felt worldwide and in South Africa it's also starting to take a toll on the tourism sector. Some regions are worse off than others, but with the loss of water and grazing, wildlife reserves are having to cull or sell animals and supplement the feed of those left behind, among other measures.

Drought and tourism

Northern KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga are the worst hit, with iSimangaliso Wetland Park (Africa's largest estuarine system) and Kruger National Park being the most affected. Kruger has some vast areas of completely barren ground and animals (mostly hippo) are starting to die, says Sam Mobasa, head of communications at SANParks.

Drought is never a pretty picture, but it is important to realise that it plays a role in weeding out weaker animals and is nature's way of regulating the ecosystem, says Mobasa. Still, our national parks, game and nature reserves are doing all they can to restore balance.

Keeping everyone fed and watered

Parks and reserves deal with drought in different ways. Some provide additional food and water, others cull or relocate some animals and there are those who simply allow nature to run its course.

Zululand Rhino Reserve in Northern KwaZulu-Natal are feeding their bulk grazers (warthog, buffalo and elephant) a supplement of sugar cane, lucerne and teff (a type of cereal grass), which frees up food for other animals. Dane Antrobus, field technician at Zululand Rhino Reserve, says the feed costs over R100 000 monthly and with rain only expected in spring, this figure will be even higher by August as grazing runs out and animals start relying more on the supplemented feed.

At iSimangaliso, hippos are lost to injuries from fights rather than starvation. "Hippos can travel up to 45km to find food, so we don't lose them due to a lack of food. But they are territorial and some hippo from the pans move to the lake, where the water table is higher and there is more grass," says Thandi Shabalala, the park authority's tourism information co-ordinator. Here, fights ensue. However, iSimangaliso are

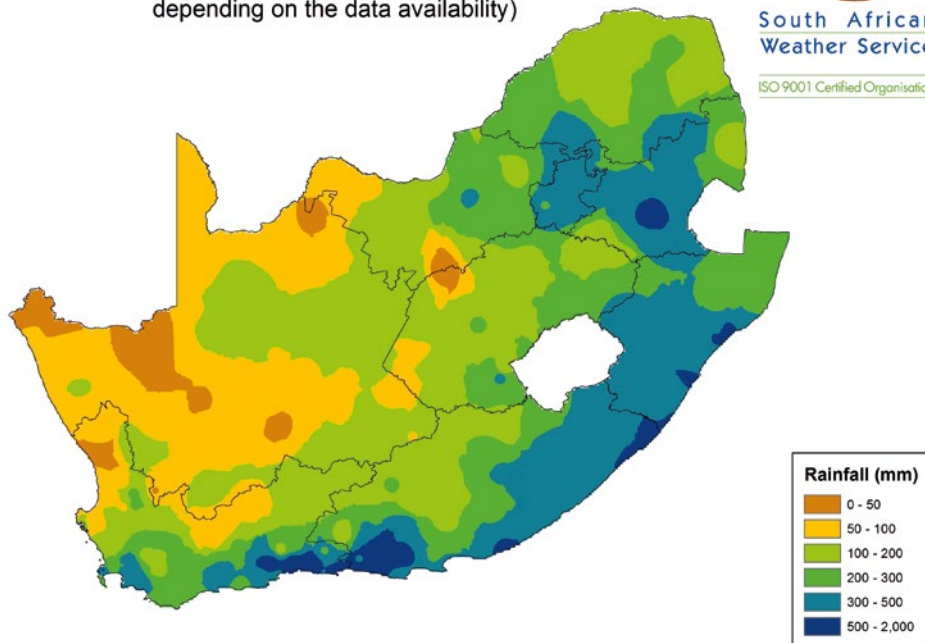
also feeding their other animals a sugar cane supplement.

Kruger, on the other hand, does not supplement feed. The national park has also closed most of its artificial waterholes over the last decade, with only a few remaining along popular tourist routes. It may sound harsh, but artificial waterholes cause other problems, says Samantha Vorster, assistant lodge manager at Mavela Game Lodge in Zululand Rhino Reserve.

"Artificial watering holes mean animals can utilise a lot more of the reserve. Then they start eating food that normally wouldn't be near water. "With the right amount of animals grazing, grass growth is stimulated, but if there are too many animals they start eating the terminal bud at ground level and the grass ceases

Rainfall (mm) for season July 2015 - January 2016

(Based on preliminary data, The number of stations vary depending on the data availability)



“Drought is never a pretty picture, but it is important to realise that it plays a role in weeding out weaker animals and is nature’s way of regulating the ecosystem.”

to grow. Then they move on to the less palatable plants, which stimulates growth of those plants, resulting in more unpalatable species than palatable ones.”

Boreholes are also an expensive business, costing up to R60 000 for an electricity-powered borehole and between R45 000 and R80 000 for a solar-powered one, according to Neville Hawkey of Borehole Tests & Solutions. Prices vary according to the depth of the borehole and the distance between the solar panels and the watering holes. There’s also no guarantee you will always have water and in some places elephants are fond of destroying the pipes.

Relocating and culling

As rhino are under threat of extinction, special precautions are taken with regard to their survival in a drought. During a severe drought in 2004, 23 rhino were moved from uMkhuze to the eastern shores of iSimangaliso. And in December 2015 conservation authorities relocated six white rhinos from uMkhuze Game Reserve to the western shores of Lake St Lucia, almost 120km away.


Zululand Rhino Reserve have been relocating and selling some of their wildlife to keep overgrazing at bay. Vorster says they are not in favour of culling, but they have been told that for every animal that isn’t culled, they could

lose two to starvation. Mobasa says Kruger has already started culling, with over 50 hippo downed and 200 or so buffalo possibly next.

What about hotels and lodges?

Water restrictions also affect hotels and lodges. Thuso Moroe, rooms division manager at Tsogo Sun in Nelspruit, says their biggest restriction is watering their lush gardens, limited to 20 minutes a day, once a week. Guests need not worry about going without water to drink or not being able to shower or bath as water for this is readily available. Many hotels, including Tsogo Sun in Nelspruit, have implemented water-saving showerheads and have reduced the amount of water used when flushing a toilet.

Is it all doom and gloom?

iSimangaliso has had over 450mm of rain in the last few months so things are improving, as grazing slowly makes a comeback and the lakes’ saline levels return to normal. Kruger has also had heavy downpours, but it will take a lot more rain to quench the park’s thirst. Global warming can no longer be ignored, but we can find solace in the fact that nature is resilient and has bounced back in the past. No doubt she will do so again. 

What can travellers do to save water?

Think of the animals when you decide between a shower or bath. They’re vying for that water, too. An average bath uses about 80 litres of water, while a four-minute shower uses approximately 24 litres of water. Let hotel staff know that you’re willing to reuse your sheets and towels. Washing machines can use between 50-150 litres of water per load. A running tap uses about six litres per minute. Use the plug while washing hands, brushing teeth or shaving. Report leaking taps to management immediately.

Flush less

Flushing a toilet uses around 4.5 litres. Place a bottle of water in your toilet cistern to displace some of the water, you’ll get the same flushing pressure while using less water.

Will I see animals dying everywhere?

You may come across some dead and emaciated animals, but you will actually see a lot more wildlife on safari during a drought as they tend to stick around waterholes. The chances of seeing lion and hyena are therefore also high.

Away with the aliens

While indigenous trees use little water, alien species such as pine trees use more and can ruin ecosystems, as was the case at iSimangaliso where over 24 000 pine trees were removed. It saved the wetlands from disaster. Locals can sign up with an alien plant removal programme in their area to save water and our natural biodiversity, visit www.invasives.org.za.

MAKING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS WORK FOR YOU

Professional online content creators have become an integral part of the digital marketing mix. But you need to know who to use and how.

By Iga Motylska (@igamotylska)

Where did you go on your last holiday? What was it that made you decide to choose that particular destination? How did you research it? Chances are it wasn't only from guidebooks, magazines and newspapers, since these are no longer the primary sources of information for planning a holiday. These days, around 80% of leisure and business travel is researched online, according to data from Ipsos Media. Referrals from friends, travel and review websites, blogs and social media platforms are the go-to-choice for destination research and travel planning. And top travel bloggers are influencing travel decisions more and more.

Professional content creators, also known as bloggers and social media influencers, who have amassed a loyal following of thousands across a number of social media platforms, also offer an alternative to traditional media. They are online storytellers who narrate their experiences to their engaged audiences. That's not to say that traditional marketing has become irrelevant, but digital can complement print very well, especially as audiences are digital creatures who experience the world online.

"We [as travel businesses] can't rely on an advert or PR agency," says Mariëtte Du Toit-Helmbold, founder of Destinate, a specialised destination and tourism marketing agency. "Where's the customer, how can we connect with them in the best way possible? Who are the authentic voices that consumers are listening to and are influenced

by? And how can we get those voices to tell our story for us, to connect and to share those moments of inspiration with the audience and get them to notice us? Because it's all about being noticed."

Destinate works closely with professional content creators to produce content across multiple online platforms for clients – from small travel businesses to regional and national tourism boards. Du Toit-Helmbold believes social media influencers should be truthful to their audiences and declare

when they are being hosted by a client, but should guard their editorial independence when they write about their experiences.

"People are okay that someone has been hosted. But they are not okay if the content is not authentic. They will call you out; they will smell it a mile away," she says.

"From a consumer perspective, trust is everything now and they don't trust DMOs,

governments and business owners. They trust those authentic voices that aren't owned or brought by a brand."

Her advice to professional content creators is to be credible, not to be seen as being cheap or sell out to brands that don't fit their personal online brand just for the money. They should also understand the ethics and best practice of this ever-evolving industry, she adds

Travel businesses that want to direct their marketing online should create a digital strategy for what they want to achieve through their campaign and find appropriate influencers – through credible networks, preferably those whose niche is travel, such as the African Bloggers Network (ABN) and iAmbassador.



“Digital marketing is not free or cheap. That’s a misconception, but you can make your money work harder for you and you can definitely get a return on investment.”

“Pro bloggers will have a media pack, will tell you who their audience is and what their reach is. Some can even dissect that audience for you. You need to study that info and understand their engagement,” continues Du Toit-Helmbold.

“Digital marketing is not free or cheap. That’s a misconception, but you can make your money work harder for you and you can definitely get a return on investment.” You don’t necessarily have to work with the big influencer names who cost a lot either. There are alternatives for smaller tourism businesses, such as hobby and amateur bloggers, as well as up-and-coming photographers and videographers.

Naturally, Clients want to know what their return on investment (ROI) and the value of such an online campaign will be for their brand or business. “When bloggers report back about ROI, we’re looking at how many retweets they got on Twitter, how many likes they got on Facebook, their reach on Instagram and so on, but for me the real ROI is the content they have created, because that content will be online forever. It’s measurable, and people who search for travel tips or inspiration can find it,” says Keith Jenkins, founder of iAmbassadors, which creates online campaigns featuring some of the world’s most influential travel bloggers. “When you create content with a blogger and put it out there on your blog and via social media, you’re driving engagement, you’re interacting with your audience and you’re getting audiences more interested in that destination. For me, that’s real ROI. This should be the main focus instead of things like how many sales I made by working with this blogger or what the advertising equivalent value (AEV) was,” he says.

Tania Benade, analyst team leader at BrandsEye, a digital intelligence tool that measures a brand’s prominence in the media and online, explains how AEV is calculated: “If you were to publish something in a newspaper or an advert on radio what would it cost you to reach 100 000 people?”


“Look at the author’s credibility and engagement. Perhaps you can’t say you’ve made R30 000, but over a period of time you will see a return on investment because people will use that info or read the blogs,” says du Toit-Helmbold.

“Make sure your social media campaign has conversion at its heart. It’s got to point to your website, blog or

booking site with strong calls to action worked in where appropriate,” she says.

Simon Lewis, owner of Travel Concept Solutions, which creates campaigns for travel brands using social media influencers, also weighs in on the conversation. He says the key is to manage people’s expectations in an online digital marketing campaign. “If a client says they want bookings from a social media campaign, I say no. If that’s your sole purpose in terms of ROI, let’s say in terms of a lodge, you’re not going to get them. You may get them in the long-term, but you’re not going to get them for a short-term investment. On a written blog post, you also have to think about the SEO and Google ranking aspect of it.”

Instead, you can also ask social media influences or bloggers to provide a content package of good quality professional photos, a video, one blog post before and another after their stay and social media content, which they will also distribute to their audience, advises Lewis.

“When you sell a full page advert, people want to know how many copies and where are they distributed. They want to know that it will potentially get in front of the right audience. A digital influencer can say: this is my audience and I can make sure they see it. Six months down the line they can show you how many members of their audience have seen it. A magazine can’t do that. Also, you can’t get engagement from a magazine. On social media people can ask questions,” he continues. 

Mariëtte du Toit-Helmbold’s tips for working with social media influencers

1. They should have an engaged audience.
2. They should allow your story to live online by having a good presence across a number of social media platforms and should preferably have a blog too.
3. A detailed media kit will explain how they will reach their audience best.
4. Professionalism is key, as they are publicists for your brand.
5. They should be willing to commit to certain outcomes that are agreed upfront in a contract.

FROM MAURITIUS TO THE WORLD

Air Mauritius, which services 25 regional and international destinations, has been voted best airline in the Indian Ocean at the World Travel Awards for the last seven years. And it's soaring to even greater heights, says Carla da Silva.

Mapping out the routes

The mistake people often make with airlines that service islands is that their flight routes are localised and don't extend far beyond a few destinations. Air Mauritius certainly transcends that misconception. Its routes serve Australia, China, Southeast Asia, India, Europe, Africa and the Indian Ocean islands via its hub in Mauritius. In May, the airline launched two new African services to Maputo and Dar es Salaam. This brings the number of African cities it operates within to six, including Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Nairobi. In mid-July, Air Mauritius launched a weekly service to Guangzhou in China, which complements their connectivity between Africa and Asia with Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu, alongside their existing routes to Perth, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai. Air Mauritius also has code share agreements with South African Airways, Air France and Emirates.

Frequent Flyer Programme

Kestrel Flyer, the airline's frequent flyer programme, signed a partnership with Emirates Skywards Frequent Flyer in May. It allows frequent flyer members from both programmes to earn and redeem accumulated miles on flights


operated by both carriers. Kestrel Flyer Gold members have access to the Emirates Business Class Lounge in Dubai when travelling with an Air Mauritius ticket on Emirates-operated flights or in Mauritius-Dubai or Dubai-Mauritius sectors.

South Africans can Travel Smart

Air Mauritius' Travel Smart Programme offers South African leisure, corporate or MICE travellers incentives to visit the tropical paradise (only a four-hour flight away) during the quieter months of low season. These include: two kids (under the age of 12) fly for free (only pay taxes) with two parents; Business Class Lounge Access in South Africa for the whole family; 20% discount on the bride's fare when going on

honeymoon; and one golf bag per person flies free. They know how busy life can get and offer one free date change when travelling to India, China and Australia from South Africa. Not only that, passengers can also enjoy a free stopover in Mauritius, including accommodation, airport transfers and meals on all non-connecting international flights.

Modernising the fleet

Air Mauritius has a fleet of 12 Airbus aircraft. The carrier is in the process of modernising its fleet and has ordered six new Airbus A350-900 XWBs, the first of which will be delivered in October 2017. Their aircraft are all about relaxation, ensuring passengers get to their destination feeling refreshed; business class offers lie-flat seats. 

WHY AIR MAURITIUS?

Air Mauritius is the tropical island's national carrier that services 25 international and regional routes across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Indian Ocean islands and Oceania. It was voted best airline in the Indian Ocean at the World Travel Awards for the last seven years. The airline is IOSA-certified, IATA-accredited and approved by the EASA.

To book your flights, visit www.airmauritius.com, contact jnbmk@airmauritius.com or call +27(0)11-601-3900.





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AIR MAURITIUS

LANSERIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Lanseria International Airport's new CEO, Rampa Rammopo, talks shop about his short-term plans for the airport and what passengers can expect from their recent upgrades.

Lanseria International Airport, conveniently situated in north-western Gauteng, has implemented large infrastructure expansions and upgrades to accommodate passenger growth and industry demand. It aims to expand on its current airline schedules to Durban and Cape Town.

New CEO on the flightdeck

Rampa Rammopo, CEO of Lanseria International Airport as of October 2015, has big plans for what is the only privately-owned South African international airport in a market that is predominantly dominated by parastatal ACSA. With his qualification as a chartered accountant and background in finance, he hopes to take the airport to new heights.

"An airport is a permanent construction site," he says. You need to spend money to create the infrastructure, which will then attract new business and airlines." His short-term (five to 10-year) plan for the airport encompasses further expansions. He believes airports need to be more convenient, "passengers should spend as little time as possible at an airport before catching their flight, that's our goal."

Upgrades and developments

In recent months, Lanseria International Airport has completed various expansion, modernisation

and construction projects at its international terminal, which reopened for operations in early July with a new international terminal and expanded retail section.

The upgraded VIP lounge will open at the end of August and a Slow Lounge is also on the cards, with hopes of it being operational in time for the December rush. A new air traffic control tower and emergency services establishment is also under construction on the south side of the runway. It will provide state-of-the-art security and emergency services and should be operational before the end of the year.

Next year, the airport hopes to start construction on a business hotel and a multi-storey parkade to cater to the increased number of flights departing from its terminals.

The airport is also working towards developing a tourism hub by working closely with local and regional tourism associations to promote nearby tourist attractions such as The Cradle of Humankind, the Magaliesberg mountain range and Hartbeespoort Dam along with its numerous attractions.

Flying with Safair

Lanseria currently serves three local airlines: Mango, Khulula and as of 01 August Safair began flying to Cape Town twice daily and to George twice weekly. The domestic terminal houses four Safair check-in counters. The airport's board is also in talks with a number of regional airlines after a recent upgrade to its runway, which can now accommodate wide-bodied aircraft as well as international and regional airlines. 

WHAT IS LANSERIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT?

Lanseria International Airport is South Africa's only privately-owned international airport. It's a hub for local flights to Durban, Cape Town and George from north-western Gauteng and has recently undergone an expansion project to accommodate regional and international flight routes.

Fly from Lanseria
Address: Airport Road, Lanseria
Tel: +27(0)11-367-0300.
Website: www.lanseria.co.za



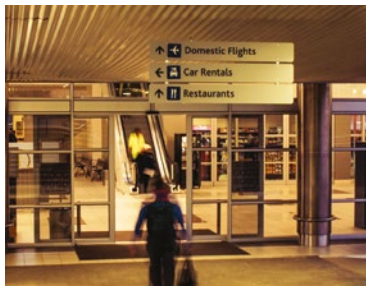
Johannesburg's Airport of Choice

Lanseria International Airport is Gauteng's premier business and general aviation hub, providing services designed with the needs of this sector in mind, a home away from home. It's conveniently positioned north of Johannesburg, close to the business hub Sandton, as well as Pretoria, Midrand, Krugersdorp and surrounds.



World class airport facilities:

- Spacious airport building servicing **Domestic** and **International** flights
- Connectivity to **Cape Town and Durban**
- One-of-a-kind open air **viewing deck** that overlooks the runway
- Close proximity to **hotels and B&B's** and many tourist attractions
- Aircraft **parking** (close to the terminal building)
- VIP lounges
- Convenient **drop off zone**
- **Quick** and **easy** transfers
- **No congestion** at immigrations and customs
- Open 24/7



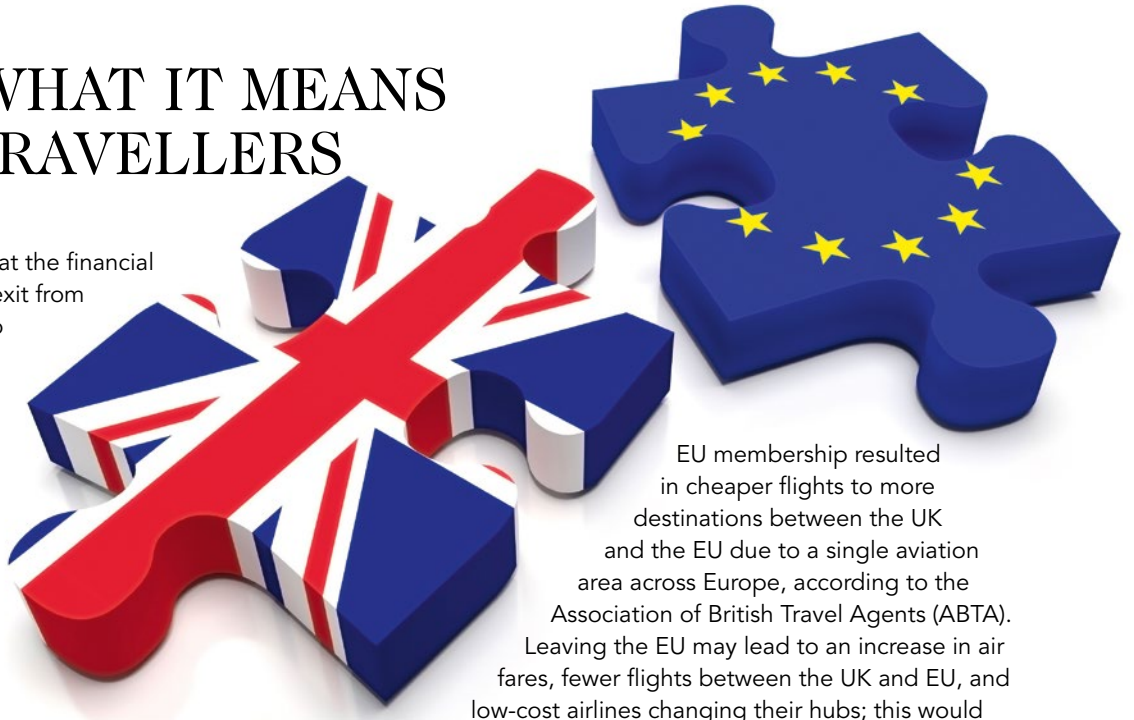
With all these world class facilities on offer, shouldn't you be considering Lanseria International Airport?

TRAVEL NEWS

BREXIT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR SA TRAVELLERS

It's still too early to tell what the financial repercussions of Britain's exit from the EU within the next two years and its effects on travel to and from the UK will be; this after a successful Vote Leave campaign led by Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. But if it causes the pound to take a tumble, it could make it more affordable for South Africans travelling to the UK.

However, Brexit was opposed by airlines, as



EU membership resulted in cheaper flights to more destinations between the UK and the EU due to a single aviation area across Europe, according to the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). Leaving the EU may lead to an increase in air fares, fewer flights between the UK and EU, and low-cost airlines changing their hubs; this would depend on the government's negotiation with the EU, however.

MISS SOUTH AFRICA ON TRAVEL

Ntandoyenkosi (Ntando) Kunene travelled internationally for the first time shortly after being crowned Miss South Africa in March. Here's what she had to share as a first-time international traveller after her skiing trip to Austria.

"Travelling taught me that I can adjust to new places really well." Her advice to travellers is: "Be adventurous! Go on a different trip, a trip most people don't do." She still wants to explore more of South Africa, and her favourite local places to visit are Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. But next on her list are Monaco, Bora Bora and Jamaica.





LATAM Airlines will fly direct between Johannesburg and São Paulo three times per week from **October 2016**.

ALL-AFRICA PASSPORT

The African Union announced the launch of the all-Africa passport – that will grant visa-free access to all 54 member states – at the AU summit in Kigali, Rwanda in late July. Currently only 13 African countries are accessible to all African citizens without a visa. There are hopes of rolling it out to all African citizens by 2018. It will encourage the freedom of movement, intra-African trade, as well as social integration and economic development. The African Development Bank (AfDB) stated that easing entrance requirements will fuel economic growth across the continent.



CAPE TOWN COMES OUT TOPS

The Mother City was recently named the best city in Africa and the Middle East to visit, as well as the tenth best city globally by Travel + Leisure. It was also named the 2015/2016 Telegraph Travel Awards' Best City in the World for the fourth year running. While in Condé Nast's Readers Choice Awards it was voted the world's number one food city.



PASSAGE TO INDIA

South Africa is set to relax its visa restrictions for Indian travellers, which will promote ease of travel to the country, according to President Jacob Zuma. Soon Indian travellers will be able to apply for 10-year visas, while since February, South Africans have been able to apply for e-visas for India.

FlySafair will fly from **Lanseria International Airport** in north-western Gauteng from **01 August**.



BLOGGER WE ❤️

Katarina Mancama's blog My Slow Journey (www.myslowjourney.com) is about travelling slower: exploring deeper, engaging more and making conscious choices that benefit the destination and enrich travellers' experiences. It's about getting off the beaten path to meet people, see the real country and try local food and drink. Here you'll read about hiking and camping, five-star luxury as well as crazy adventures. Katarina's life is all about travel as she creates tours and also guides some of them. And while she travels a lot for work, she travels some more once she's off.



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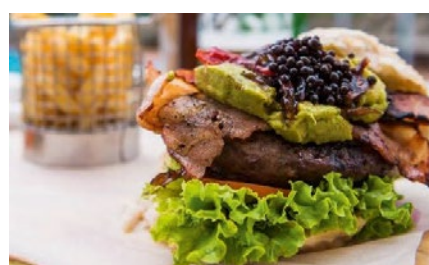
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Activities such as our spa, horse-riding, hiking, mountain biking, fishing and many more, will leave you refreshed, rejuvenated and wanting more.



MICE

news

YOUR GUIDE
TO MEETINGS,
INCENTIVES,
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Travel Update is a proud media partner of various local and international travel trade shows. Grab the latest issue at the three **AVIAREPS MINI AIRLINE FAIRS** and find the next issue at **WTM London**.



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30 YEARS STRONG

By SAACI chairperson Wayne Johnson

SAACI was thought up in the shade a willow tree in the Free State in 1985 by founding members Nick Stathakis, Keith McCusker and Godfrey King. They recognised the need to professionalise the South African conference industry in a way that would also advocate the importance of this MICE sector. The first SAACI congress, under the banner the Conference of Conferences, was hosted a year later. In 2016, on its 30th anniversary, SAACI returned to Mangaung, its birth province.

The theme for this year’s annual conference was “*with knowledge, it’s possible*”. Content is the most important aspect of any business event and 80% of our content was linked to our world body, the Convention Industry Council. Following the theme of education, we partnered with the Nelson Mandela Foundation, our charity of choice, on their literacy project.

The programme covered a wide range of educational topics and

aspects of the business events industry with some local and international heavyweight speakers. Delegates were offered a leadership and sales master class, hosted by Susan Lasecki-Coiro and Thaamir Moerat respectively.

On the education front we held a panel discussion on qualifications, accreditation and education, hosted by Karen Kotowski (CEO of the Convention Industry Council); Mandisa Silo (head of the school of sport, events, tourism and hospitality (SETH) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology); Nellie Swart (senior lecturer in tourism at the University of South Africa); and Pieter Swart (managing director of Conference Consultancy South Africa).

The theme of our 31st congress, which will take place in Tshwane in June next year, will be “Innovation at Work”. As we reflect on the past three decades, it’s evident that the positive value of business meetings, trade shows, exhibitions and conferences is undeniable in the growth of any

economy. By rallying industry advocates, conducting research and working with stakeholders, SAACI aims to bring the industry together to emphasise our importance as a leading contributor to the economy, growing the industry through integrity, intelligence, innovation and sustainability.

SAACI LAUNCHES NEW PROVINCIAL BRANCHES

- SAACI Mpumalanga branch was launched on 30 June
 - SAACI Limpopo branch was launched on 01 July
 - SAACI North-West branch was launched on 04 July
 - SAACI Western Cape was launched on 14 July
- Contact the SAACI head office +27(0)11-880-5883, if you would like to join a branch.



MICE Trends 2016

Incentive travel experienced a strong year in 2015 and **36%** of travel industry professionals expect to spend more than **\$4 000** per person in 2016.




Exhibitions within the trade show industry are predicted to grow by **2.4%** during **2016**

source: www.hospitalitynet.org

RWANDA'S MICE SECTOR EXPECTED TO BOOM

President Paul Kagame unveiled the \$300-million Kigali Convention Centre ahead of the July Africa Union Summit. The 2 600-seater venue also includes a five-star hotel, three restaurants, cafés and bars, and is one of the government's many initiatives to stimulate the country's tourism industry by means of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions.


Last year, Rwanda hosted 27 major conferences and 12 association meetings, which poured \$39 million into the East African country's coffers. And this year, the country hosted, most notably, the World Economic Forum on Africa, which welcomed 2 500 delegates. The country's open visa policy makes it easier for international delegates to attend MICE activities.

The Rwanda Development Board predicts that in the next year revenue from the local MICE sector will triple to \$150 million from \$49 million in 2013. The contribution towards the GDP from tourism receipts was 10% in 2014 and Rwanda wants to grow this to 24% by 2018. 



AVIAREPS AIRLINE MINI FAIR

This year, the annual AVIAREPS Airline Mini Fair will include three host cities. The free aviation exhibition will host numerous local, regional, and international airlines and welcome the travel trade – tour operators, travel agents, TMCs and those in the MICE sector – to talk shop about the aviation industry.

Each of the three editions (Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban) will have two three-hour sessions, a morning session (9am-12pm) and an afternoon session (1pm-4pm). There are only 350 spaces available each day for trade visitors. 


Cape Town: 11 August

Johannesburg: 19 September



TASTE OF AFRICA ROADSHOW

The annual Taste of Africa Roadshow, now in its 14th year, will take place in Scandinavia from October 17-20 and will solely focus on the MICE sector. Denmark (Copenhagen) and Sweden (Stockholm and Gothenburg) have been identified as MICE hubs with the biggest potential for the African market.

Suppliers that will be part of the roadshow are requested to only present incentives, meetings and conference product offerings. They will also have the opportunity to attend information and product training sessions relevant to their market segment. Visitors will be able to pre-book time slots to meet with suppliers between 10am and 4pm on the four show days. 

For more information, contact Iris Himmel on iris@swafrica.co.za or +27(0)11-880-0910.

Durban: 19 October

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CONFERENCEING IN AFRICA

MICE leaders share their insights about how to grow the African tourism sector through exhibitions and conferences. Here are extracts of quotes about the industry, as compiled by Glyn Taylor and Gary Koetser of the Century City Conference Centre.

Glyn Taylor and Gary Koetser
Century City Conference Centre (CCCC)

“Get the basics right”

“On the African continent at the moment there’s a massive surge in terms of association business being sparked up. This is one sector in the hospitality industry that will see longevity. The City of Cape Town has identified that we need to focus on business travel, and there’s been a massive drive in marketing to the business traveller globally. Cities around the world have realised that a conference centre is a massive marketing tool that provides a large income for the surrounding stakeholders – so there is great stability in conferencing.

Conferencing is a facet of the tourism sector that’s experiencing growth and will see vast investment in the future, and we see it already because it’s a sustainable income stream for our country.”

Tes Proos
Crystal Events & Incentives, Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) South Africa

“We need to harness our strengths”

“Whilst South Africa is at the forefront as an African incentive and conference destination, we

need to pay attention to service levels in order to stay ahead of our game – or risk losing it to a keener competitor. We are no longer the cheapest destination, hence value for money has to be tangible, along with the best possible experience that any delegate could have.”

Craig Newman
Expo Centre, UFI

“Main economic contributor”

“In the next five to 10 years, the South African MICE industry should be one of the main economic contributors of this country. To get there, we need much greater public sector participation and flexibility because people participating in conferences and exhibitions from abroad encounter major challenges when applying for visas. We need ease of access and greater communication between the public sector and the conference organisers and venues.

South Africa is a choice destination, we have the expertise, experience and capability to handle large-scale events. In fact, we have never dropped the ball on a big international event irrespective of its demands. We are right up there with what the rest of the world can offer, but global trends keep us on our toes and ensure that we are constantly in line with what is happening in the rest of the world.

Everything is ripe for South Africa to be the leading country within the business tourism sector for Africa. It should become the biggest contributor towards the South African economy, but we need these challenges to be addressed first.”

Carol Weaving
Thebe Reed Exhibitions, AAXO

“Moving ahead rapidly”

“To a large extent, the amount of demand for business events in a destination tends to directly reflect levels of economic activity in that destination. Africa’s competitiveness in the MICE market is also dependent upon the level and quality of its infrastructure.

Crucial to the international MICE tourism sector are frequent, direct flight links between African states and key markets. Venues of a world-class standard continue to open their doors to business tourism in countries all over the continent.”

Pieter Swart
Conference Consultancy SA

“We’ve reached maturity”

“We understand that change brought about by internal and external influences, such as politics, economy, infrastructure or technology, is a constant and therefore we have learned to embrace them

as opportunities. This virtue not only makes our industry resilient and sustainable but also highly competitive and attractive.

The security of our industry depends on our ability to develop our single most valuable asset, human capital.

The currency of our trade, skill and competence, is in good hands. South Africa is home to some of the world's most dynamic industry leaders and brightest minds."

Bronwen Cadle de Ponte
CSIR ICC

"We've come a long way"

"Our industry is experiencing significant shifts due to volatile international economic conditions, increasingly stringent government spending regulations, increasing compliance burdens and travel safety, health and visa concerns and yet the market in South Africa continues to show healthy growth.

These challenges present opportunities for us as in industry to innovate, become more professional, and prove our sector's qualified worth. I believe that the next 10 years will see the meetings industry in South Africa be seen as progressively contributing tangibly to the world knowledge economy as opposed to just hosting events if we take up the challenges positively and seriously and professionalise at every opportunity."

Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo
South Africa National
Convention Bureau

"It's all about Africa"

"We need to gear up and support DMCs that have these clients and ensure our product is ready to offer

this. We need to gear up to focus and to support, and if you look at the year-on-year growth that we've had now, that already says they are coming.

We had a lot of spectacular recovery and there's a huge opportunity for us. I think there's opportunity in Africa – keep on doing what we're doing right with the international associations, and focusing on enabling your incentive, high-end traveller to come. I think that ups the status of the industry."

Julie-May Ellingson
CTICC, AIPC

"Take advantage of the exchange rate"

"South Africa has an incredible opportunity to take advantage of the favourable exchange rate to acquire international meetings and events, particularly in the corporate and incentive markets.

The benefits do not end at hosting conferences and events. There is a macro-economic contribution as well, exposing our destination to trade and investment opportunities."

Lindiwe Rakharebe
Durban ICC

"Technology will continue to impact the sector"

"Technology will continue to impact the events experience and the way venues aim to meet their clients' requirements. I do not believe that virtual meeting options will lead to the demise of face-to-face meetings as people still crave and appreciate human interaction, however conference delegates and exhibition visitors are a lot more


tech-savvy than ever before, where uninterrupted Wi-Fi and digital information is expected when attending events."

Dirk Elzinga
Convention Industry
Consultants (CIC)

"More competition"

"For the first time in more than a decade several serious new African international convention centres will open their doors [ICC in Calabar, Nigeria, ICC in Kigali, Rwanda, the congress and exhibition centre in Algiers, Algeria and Century City Congress Centre in Cape Town, South Africa]. As I am a strong believer in the economic principle that 'supply does create demand' (at least in our industry in Africa), one can expect that from 2017 onwards the international congress statistics of ICCA and UIA will show a significant growth in the number of meetings in Africa. The question of course is: what will happen with the South African market share?

"One can expect that the four new convention centres will all contribute to the marketing of our continent as a congress destination of choice. That is good for Africa, good for our industry. But in South Africa we will have to work harder to maintain, let alone grow, our present market share of approximately 120 international meetings per year.

New convention centre capacity not only in Cape Town (the CCCC and the extension of the CTICC) but also in Tshwane (the new convention centre that Tshwane Municipality plans to develop) will play an important role to make sure that South Africa will continue to benefit from the increased interest in the continent as a result of all the fresh marketing initiatives." 



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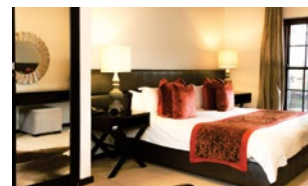
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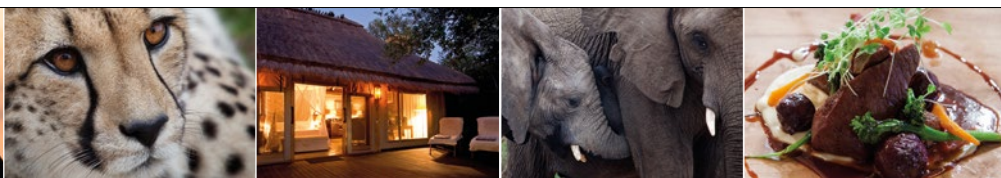


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