

# Joburg tourism on the life of the city

 By [Cari Van Wyk](#)

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Johannesburg Tourism's Welcome to Jozi - Make a visitor's day! campaign calls on each Joburg resident to be Johannesburg's tourism ambassadors while also highlighting everything Johannesburg has to offer in terms of tourism. We found out more from Laura Vercueil, PR and communications manager for Joburg Tourism.



■ ***Tell us more about the spirit of Johannesburg, its urban way of life.***

**Laura Vercueil:** Joburg is a wonderful melting pot of many cultures, whose traditions and festivals bring much colour and vibrancy to the city's multi-cultural landscape. Our rich history and heritage provide fascinating insights into South Africa's past, while our arts, culture and lifestyle offering breathes life into the city.

Joburg is so much more than a stopover city. Whether you're visiting on business, for a conference, as a sports enthusiast, coming for a holiday, to study here, for medical reasons or visiting friends and relatives, there are so many great experiences to be had and interesting places to explore that it will leave you longing to return for more.

■ ***Inner-city regeneration projects have seen a rise in popularity for districts such as Maboneng and Braamfontein. Are there any other regeneration projects going on or being planned?***

**Vercueil:** Both the private and public sectors in Joburg are very active in the regeneration space, so there is a continuous stream of projects and initiatives being launched. Some of those that come to mind are the Joburg Development Agency's plans to redevelop the Hillbrow Tower into a tourist precinct, an aerial walkway linking UJ to Milpark and the development of a new multi-use cultural hub in Eloff Street called Joziburg Lane, to mention only three.

■ **Key factors that lend Johannesburg to business travel?**

**Vercueil:** Johannesburg is a major gateway into Africa - of the total foreign business tourists that arrive in Gauteng province, Johannesburg attracts the lion's share. In 2013, Joburg attracted 82.4% of all foreign business. The City of Johannesburg is home to world-class conferences and events and has impressive business events credentials in anyone's book.

The City of Johannesburg is up there with the best globally as a destination for conferences and events. Aside from all the major international business and sporting events hosted here since the mid-90's, Joburg is home to increasing hotel inventory and an abundance of superb convention facilities, all supported by a well-established and growing service sector and impressive infrastructure.

In terms of conferencing and exhibitions, Joburg is home to the Big Four Convention Centres, capable of hosting over 5,000 people – Expo Centre Nasrec, Gallagher Estate in Midrand, the Ticketpro Dome and the Sandton Convention Centre, This includes unique transport features like the Gautrain, Rea Vaya BRT and of course, OR Tambo International Airport, which is the country's most important travel hub. Over 55 airlines link Johannesburg to major centres worldwide, making it one of the easiest to access on the African continent.

■ **Significant steps are being taken regarding transport in the city. How will this influence tourism, both leisure and business, in the city?**

**Vercueil:** A fully integrated transport system makes it easier and more cost effective for residents and visitors to move around the city, safely and comfortably – and without the hassle of worrying about issues like road safety, directions and parking. So transport is a great facilitator and enabler as far as tourism is concerned, making all the vastly different corners of the metropolis easily accessible.

The Rea Vaya Bus system provides a fast, safe and affordable transport system, which is an essential element in the tourism mix to enable visitors to easily explore the diversity of a metropolis the size of Joburg.

■ **Are there any missing links in the tourism chain in the city, anything it still needs? If so, what plans are in the pipeline to address this?**

**Vercueil:** Perhaps, just a greater awareness of the value of tourism and the role that each of us plays in enhancing the visitor experience. This is why Joburg Tourism is launching its Domestic Campaign under the theme: Welcome to Jozi – Make a Visitor’s Day Today! [#Welcome2Jozi](#)

The objectives of the campaign are the following:

- Illustrate how tourism impacts each and every one of us as residents of Johannesburg, how we all have an important role to play in making tourists welcome and promoting our city as ambassadors to visitors and potential visitors.
- Inform, educate and improve service levels to tourists and visitors, and create civic pride and ambassadorship amongst locals and residents for Johannesburg, Africa’s leading business and lifestyle destination.
- Showcase Joburg’s capabilities and credentials as an international destination of choice, as well as showcasing the city as a global, all year round destination for business and investment, business events, lifestyle, sports and leisure.
- Demonstrate how tourism impacts us all as residents of a city, and part of the tourism value chain – from customs and airport officials, airport information desks and transport services, to accommodation establishments, cultural and heritage tourism sites and attractions, shopping, sports, entertainment and leisure activities.

## ABOUT CARI VAN WYK

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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