

Global travel trends that will help position SA as a sought-after travel destination in 2018

According to Martin Wiest, chief executive of Tourvest's Destination Management division, the South African tourism industry stands to benefit from global travel trends such a **desire to visit off-the-beaten-track places**, a greater **social and environmental awareness** and growing interest in **activity-based tourism**. These will allow the industry to position South Africa as a sought-after travel destination in 2018.



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Millennials driving change in travel

Driving many of these trends is the millennial generation, now in their twenties and thirties, who have emerged as a key source demographic. “Millennials are well known for their social and environmental conscience, and will shun countries with poor human rights and environmental practices while seeking to support those travel companies, whose values mirror their own,” says Wiest.

At the same time, according to Wiest, these travellers are seeking new and authentic travel experiences, no longer content with visiting well-travelled destinations. “They want to see lesser known and relatively un-commercialised places, with Cuba, Iceland, Croatia, and South Africa highly recommended by respected travel websites and publications,” he says.

“Additionally, travellers are looking for new experiences instead of mundane sight-seeing tours and South Africa emerged

as one of the best adventure travel destinations in 2017, with its wide range of offerings such as safaris, canopy tours, animal interactions, quad biking and hot air ballooning.”

Wiest says technology is also having an impact on travellers’ purchasing behaviour with new websites aggregating the best deals across thousands of booking sites and tailoring options based on a person’s search history and preferences. In this environment, travellers have become more price conscious, and destinations that offer the best value for money will benefit.

SA ticking all the boxes

“South Africa is ticking all the right boxes in terms of its affordability, conservation tourism experiences, an original and sophisticated culinary scene, and the very best in adventure offerings,” he says. “We also expect to see an uptick in local tourism with more young South Africans taking advantage of the world-class offerings in their own backyard.”

Other trends to look out for

Other travel trends to look out for, says Wiest, include the growth in **solo travel**, particularly with the rise of women-only retreats and travel agents, “**bleisure**” **trips**, with more companies including trips as incentives in employee benefit packages and **multi-generational travel** with more grandparents holidaying with their grandchildren.

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