

## 6 signs the travel and tourism sector is recovering

The tourism and hospitality industry is showing strong signs of recovery after two years of turmoil. There are a number of key indicators that it's only getting better as 2022 goes on. Below are six signs that highlight this.



Source: Supplied

### More flights to South Africa

A number of airlines have added additional routes to their schedules - all bound for South Africa. Lufthansa, for example, recently added a direct route from Frankfurt to the Kruger National Park. This will not only benefit the park and all the businesses there, but it will help the surrounding communities, too.



Other new direct routes include year-round flights between Cape Town and New York City on United Airlines with a possible Washington route coming towards the end of the year. And just recently Richard Branson used a visit to Cape Town to announce that there will be daily routes between Cape Town and London on Virgin Atlantic.



## United commences non-stop flights between Cape Town and New York

7 Jun 2022



For those looking to travel within Africa, Zambia Airways will start direct flights to South Africa in under a month. This comes after a 30-year hiatus as a result of having gone into liquidation in 1994. And, Air Côte d'Ivoire recently announced that it will launch a Johannesburg-Abidjan via Kinshasa route at the end of June 2022.

## More bums in beds

The hotel industry went through a tough time after the pandemic hit and, thankfully, things seem to be looking up. Stats SA recently revealed an 88% increase in income across the accommodation sector in March this year compared to last year. Radisson Blu Hotel Waterfront, as an example, has been exceptionally busy over the last few months.



Clinton Thom, general manager of the hotel, noted that, even when things were expected to dip, the hotel saw no respite (not that he's complaining) and kept seeing capacity well over 80% and 90% for a number of months in a row this year.

## Airbnb is focusing on new regions

Demand continues to grow for tourism offerings in more off-the-beaten-track locations. As such, Airbnb recently announced the expansion of the Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy to the Waterberg region in support of the President's District Development Model (DDM) – a pilot project designed to bring together government and private partners to tackle poverty, inequality and unemployment at the District Municipality level.

## Airbnb and partners to grow inclusive tourism in the Waterberg

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Local partnerships have also been signed with the Waterberg District Municipality, The Biosphere Reserve, and the Lapalala Wilderness School. The programme will promote the region to help build the local tourism economy, develop skills for local families to open their homes and benefit from tourism growth and the biodiversity economy, and help to grow tourism in a sustainable way and while protecting the environment.



The Airbnb Entrepreneurship Academy is a skills development programme for women and youth in township and rural communities who are interested in tourism. The academy gives attendees the skills, practical tools and support they need to use technology to access and succeed on the Airbnb platform as tourism entrepreneurs. The academy will be primarily focused on women and youth in rural and township areas within the district.

## More South Africans are looking to travel now more than ever

As South Africa heads into the core of its winter season, and the school holidays draw near, flight searches are on the rise with South Africans hunting for their mid-year holiday destinations.

Cheapflights.co.za, the global travel search site, records that flight searches across South Africa are surpassing the pre-pandemic levels for this year's winter period by about 40%. Over a third (36%) of all flight searches have been made for destinations in Europe, signalling that South Africans are once again open to travelling beyond their borders, to their favourite destinations. This is around a 30% increase in outbound European destination flight searches compared to the pre-pandemic period.

## Local brands are making bold moves

Marriott International and Platinum Hospitality Holdings have mutually agreed that the Protea Hotel by Marriott Kruger Gate will no longer be part of the Marriott International portfolio following the expiry of its current management contract which ends on August 31, 2022.

From 1 September 2022, the management of the hotel will be transferred to Platinum Hospitality Holdings, a South African hotel asset investment and administration company. The hotel will trade under the name of Kruger Gate Hotel and will be under the stewardship of Anton Gillis who will be the CEO of the hotel operation.

## Increased demand for day experiences

The tourism sector is seeing a growth in the demand for day experiences, meaning people now want to go to destinations and enjoy day-time activities without having to sleep there.



Head of marketing and communications at online booking platform, Jurni South Africa, Tshepo Matlou says: "Hiking is now a popular activity among travellers in the country. The reason is that the pandemic locked them in for a long time and since they are now free to move freely, they chose open spaces."

"The travel sector is starting to see a large number of first-time-hikers signing up and trying new destinations. Travellers get the health benefits of doing outdoor activities, which is commendable," he adds

With all that's happening around us, it's great to see that there's movement in the industry once again, which bodes well for the peak season at the end of the year.