
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

Media Release



For immediate release

To: All media

Attention: News Editors and Journalists

TOURISM KWAZULU-NATAL SEEKS TO BUILD ITS SADC TOURISM MARKET AT ESWATINI BUSHFIRE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) will be among the thousands of enthusiastic travellers heading to Eswatini's magnificent Malkerns Valley for its legendary Bushfire Festival this weekend.

In addition to enjoying the region's diverse music, culture, crafts and art installations that attract travellers from over 60 different countries to one of the largest cultural events in the kingdom, TKZN will be exhibiting the province's attractions at the event, with the aim of attracting more regional (SADC) and international visitors to Eswatini's neighbouring KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

"The warm welcome of the KZN coastline will be a wonderful contrast to the cold weather of the Malkerns Valley. Here visitors can relax in the warm winter sunshine, enjoying some of the most beautiful beaches and wildlife that KZN region has to offer. We are showing off the beauty of our province in the spirit of collaboration as discussed during the Africa Travel

Indaba and hope that our countries can work together to not only ensure that visitors to the region can enjoy what our different cultures have to offer but also show residents in SADC countries that a truly unique tourism experience is close at hand,” said Mr Nhlanhla Khumalo, the acting Chief Executive Officer of TKZN.

The distance between the Malkerns Valley and KZN’s closest border post at Pongola, is just over 4 hours by road. The good news, said Mr Khumalo, is that Eswatini Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Eswatini, launched a new direct route between King Mswati III International Airport in Manzini, Eswatini, and King Shaka International Airport in Durban in May this year.

“This new route will significantly boost the regional tourism market, with Eswatini being one of our key regional tourism markets and having strong historical and cultural ties with our province. Initially, there will be three flights per week on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays but there are already plans to increase the frequency of flights in line with demand. That is why we are working hard to grow tourism linkages between Eswatini and KZN,” he explained.

During 2022, Eswatini was second to only Zimbabwe as the source of the most travel arrivals in South Africa, with about 138 000 people visiting. During 2019, before Covid-19 travel restrictions closed borders, nearly 300 000 travellers visited South Africa from Eswatini, of which 11.8% were tourism arrivals and more than 75% visiting friends and relatives.

For those arriving by road, the immediate tourism attractions are the Pongola Game Reserve which is home to four of the Big Five as well as hippos and crocodiles and is a birding hotspot and Lake Jozini, a popular tiger fishing destination and home to the Shayamanzi house boats.

Other exhilarating wildlife destinations include the Tembe Elephant Park with its big tuskers, Mkuze where you can walk through the iconic fever tree forest and the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a World Heritage Site with 230kms of unspoilt coastline and where visitors can explore the unique estuary ecosystem and also view big game, including rhinos.

Unspoilt beaches include Sodwana Bay, Lala Nek, Kosi Bay and St Lucia. This area is renowned not only for its natural beauty but for its sport fishing, scuba diving and snorkelling, turtle tours and even whale watching between May and July.

Mr Khumalo added that, just as the Bushfire Festival highlighted Eswatini’s cultural offering and its arts and crafts, the Zulu kingdom offered a number of authentic experiences including

the Game Capture Museum, the Centenary Craft Centre within the Isimangaliso wetland park and Ilala Weavers in the town of Hluhluwe which is home to a Zulu cultural museum as well as a shop that sells beaded goods and basketry.

There is plentiful accommodation along the route which includes self-catering establishments, bed and breakfasts, hotels and luxury lodges.

Ends.

Note to editors

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal is responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of tourism into and within the province, both domestically and internationally. The organisation is an entity that reports to the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

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