
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal



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Attention: News Editors and Journalists

TOURISM KZN GATHERS NEW INSIGHTS INTO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TO KZN AT 2023 WORLD TRAVEL MARKET LONDON

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) has engaged with top tour operators at the 2023 World Travel Market London, which ends today (Wednesday), to ensure that KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is included in their itineraries and travel packages for international travellers and booking agents.

Pinky Radebe, TKZN's Senior PR and Communications Manager says that during the past three day's meetings with key tour operators from the UK, Spain, USA, the Middle East and Ghana, they have gained some interesting insights which will feed into the entity's post COVID-19 robust international marketing recovery drive.

"This strategy has laid a strong foundation for international tourism to flourish and now we are looking for growth, but to be competitive we need to know what travellers' expectations are in order for us to embrace new trends as we continue to position KZN as the must visit province," said Radebe.

She said that during their meetings with key tour operators and tour planners alike, a plea for KZN to bring back the direct UK-Durban BA flight, came through strongly.

Most of the airlines are slowly coming back to South Africa and it would be great if British Airways flew to Durban again, said UK-based tour operator, Richard Latham of Zita Tours, who currently sells South Africa and 25% of their business is KZN visits.

“Clients seek safari experiences in Hluhluwe, but these are always fully booked because of how popular they are. The Battlefields region does well as a rich historical site for our more mature UK clients,” he said.

Among other insights included the Drakensberg and Durban-Umhlanga hospitality being among the best particularly the Oyster Box Hotel; affordability and accessibility are positive factors for SA but the lack of direct international flights to KZN works against the destination.

Umhlanga is a key “city” destination which has been praised by UK tour operators for being well developed, providing good restaurants and food, and convenient access to other places of interest. Perceptions of Tourist Safety prohibiting more tourist from visiting products within the Durban CBD perspective were cited as a concern that the relevant security authorities needed to work on .

Among South Africa’s and KZN’s strengths in attracting international tourists are the Rand/Euro exchange rate which has made international travel very affordable; the country’s good national road infrastructure and good air access including to KZN.

School tours from the UK to KZN is a new trend in which British schools are visiting mostly private KZN schools for sports matches and staying on to take in the tourist attractions such as the Nelson Mandela Capture Site, the Drakensberg and the Midlands.

Edwin Doran, Product Manager from Sean Kraft said: “We work with surf clubs for our 16-day long Durban Tours and Umhlanga works well as the “waterfront” of Durban and use mostly the Protea Umhlanga and Garden Court Umhlanga hotels for accommodation.

“Our tours are to South Africa’s big cities and for KwaZulu-Natal, our clients seek heritage and educational experiences, “ he said, adding that in July 2024 they will be bringing a group of 180 high school children to KZN.

Insights from Middle East tour operators, based in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Uman, are that these tour operators focus mainly on Business 2 Business and Business 2 Consumer packages. Outbound traffic from the GCC countries amounted to 45,500 travelers which visited South

Africa with most interested in luxury, corporate Meetings, Incentives Conference and Exhibitions (MICE) leisure travel.

According to insights received from South African Tourism, during the second quarter of 2023, international arrivals in KZN amounted to 147 800 people, accounting for 1.5-million bed nights and contributing R1.4-billion to the provincial economy. Although not yet at the same level as Q2 in 2019, there are signs of recovery and encouraging opportunities for sustained future growth.

For the for the first six months of 2023 KZN welcomed over 23 000 UK tourists out of a total of 67 669 tourists from Europe.

(663 words)

ABOUT TOURISM KWAZULU-NATAL

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.

Website: <https://www.zulu.org.za>

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For media queries:

Nhlanhla Ngwenya: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

031 366 7551 / 063 698 7455

nhlanhla@zulu.org.za